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an American Marxist

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*Daniel DeLeon*  
*The Odyssey of*  
*an American Marxist*



*Daniel DeLeon*  
*The Odyssey of*  
*an American Marxist*

L. Glen Seretan

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
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*To my parents,*  
ROSE AND ARNOLD SERETAN

2046857

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STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

IN SENATE,  
January 10, 1911.  
REPORT OF THE  
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IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION  
PASSED BY THE SENATE  
MAY 1, 1909.

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L. GLEN SERETAN

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*Daniel DeLeon*  
*The Odyssey of*  
*an American Marxist*



# *Introduction*

From 1890 to 1914, Daniel DeLeon dominated the Socialist Labor Party, which until 1898 was the only nationally constituted party of socialism in America. As lecturer, debater, editor, organizer, propagandist, theoretician, delegate to meetings of the Second International, translator of Marxist literature, and frequent candidate for public office, DeLeon made his presence felt in virtually all sectors of party activity. Not content to confine himself solely to party work, he also became deeply involved in labor organizations as a forceful opponent of Samuel Gompers' "pure and simple" unionism. Serving as a delegate to the Knights of Labor's General Assemblies from 1893 to 1895, he fervently sought to fashion the Knights into a socialist alternative. Failing in this endeavor, he turned to organizing that alternative himself in the form of the ill-fated Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Later he assumed a key role in a somewhat more successful challenge to Gompers, the Industrial Workers of the World.

Even greater was DeLeon's impact in the realm of revolutionary theory. Openly avowing agreement with the main tenets of DeLeonist Marxism, Eugene Debs, as David Herreshoff has written, "evoked a greater response than has yet come to another American labor radical" in his campaigns for the Presidency on the Socialist ticket.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, J. B. S. Hardman has correctly noted that "the later radical wings of socialism and of communism in the United States took their cues" from DeLeon, as evidenced especially by the case of Louis Fraina, one of the founders of the American Communist Party. Nor were manifestations of DeLeon's importance and influence as a revolutionary thinker limited to the United States. In the British Isles, his

writings nurtured the militancy of a young Aneurin Bevan, later the fiery spokesman of the Labour Party's left wing, and struck a responsive chord among workers in Clydeside and on the Dublin docks. DeLeon's British disciples, according to E. J. Hobsbawm, functioned as a pivotal "activator of industrial militancy in Scotland." On the Continent, his writings were the chief source drawn upon for illustrations from the American context in Robert Michels' famous critique of party bureaucracy, *Political Parties*, wherein the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" was propounded. DeLeon's thought also had a substantial influence on the brilliant Italian revolutionary theorist Antonio Gramsci.<sup>2</sup> And in the newly born Soviet Union, V. I. Lenin, upon reading some of DeLeon's pamphlets, was impressed by the extent to which the American's theories had anticipated his own, particularly with regard to the structure of the soviet state.<sup>3</sup>

However, despite his significance, very little is really known about DeLeon. To be sure, adequate summaries and surface analyses of his life and career have been written, but they have tended to stereotype the man rather than explain him. What has been lacking is an understanding of motivation and causation, and more generally, an interpretive scheme that renders comprehensible a very complex and enigmatic figure. To a considerable degree the problem has been one of sources, which have a feast-or-famine character. Primary material on DeLeon's public career in the socialist movement, as can be imagined from the sheer breadth of his activity, is more than abundant; indeed, his writings alone consist of several thousand individual pieces, ranging from brief articles and editorials to multivolume translations. Having to confront such a confusingly extensive mass of data has caused scholars to retreat too often to simplistic and erroneous generalizations derived from the tendentious observations of DeLeon's contemporaries. The difficulty is compounded by the extreme sparseness of the documentation needed to put the public man in perspective. The so-called "Daniel DeLeon Papers" deposited at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, for instance, do not really comprise a personal correspondence, but rather letters, reports, and articles largely written by others and addressed to the Party organ, the *People*, or to DeLeon in his official capacity as its editor.<sup>4</sup> And reliable information about his childhood, his youth, his formal education, and his presocialist professional and political involvements is scattered and quite fragmentary.

To transcend the limitations imposed by incomplete data, it is nec-



essary to adopt a unifying interpretive concept as a guide to intelligent surmise. In recent years historians have crossed disciplinary boundaries in search of such concepts, and they have made fruitful use of many borrowings from the social sciences. Less attention has been paid to the possible insights to be gained from the humanistic disciplines, particularly literature. Nonetheless, it is from a literary theme that an extremely valuable conceptual tool for analyzing DeLeon will now be taken. That theme is the Legend of the Wandering Jew, which has permeated European folklore and literature in many forms and contexts for about sixteen hundred years. The legend is based on "the tale of a man in Jerusalem who, when Christ was carrying his Cross to Calvary and paused to rest for a moment on this man's doorstep, drove the Saviour away . . . , crying aloud, 'Walk faster!' And Christ replied, 'I will go, but you will walk until I come again!'"<sup>5</sup> Two motifs, the Legend of Malchus and the Legend of St. John, constitute the central threads of the theme. The first emphasizes the resultant suffering and anguish of the offender, condemned as he was to wander until the Second Coming; while the second stresses waiting, with the implication that redemption may not be far off. In both variants, though, the Wandering Jew, typically called "Ahasuerus," commences his journey as an accursed, tormented figure, alienated indefinitely in space and time. Together they compose the analytic core for this study, which eschews the narrative biographical mode and the detailed reiteration of factual matter in favor of a strictly interpretive approach. While the study is roughly chronological in organization, its focus is primarily thematic, the intention being to apprehend the most consequential developments in this life as parts of an integrated totality.

Of special interest are two forms the legend assumed in literature in the nineteenth century. One, responsive to the upsurge of nationalism that characterized the age, identified the Wandering Jew specifically with the Jewish people. The other, developed in Eugène Sue's celebrated left-wing novel *Le juif errant* (Paris, 1844-45), saw him instead as a champion of the proletariat against the depredations of its oppressors, "the rich, the idle, the arrogant, and the Jesuits."<sup>6</sup> Through these forms the interpretive scheme intersects that which it interprets, for Daniel DeLeon was directly and deeply affected by the factors that led to the Wandering Jew's being identified with the Jewish people, and by the content of the Sue novel itself.

Bringing these forms to bear on the subject highlights the fact that

DeLeon lived a life dominated by the polar opposites of alienation and community. The determining force in his life was a quest to overcome an oppressive sense of isolation by finding a sense of place, a sense of belonging, in the rapidly evolving universe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose disruptive effects had been the source of his travail. That quest was tortuous, kaleidoscopic in its variations, its later manifestations incorporating remnants of the earlier. Yet a coherent pattern reflecting a continuous searching is discernible in the complexity.

In many respects, then, what follows is an examination of a phenomenon of sociological dimension in microcosm—an investigation of the impact of the salient features of a dynamic era upon one man, and his attempts to deal with it.

# 1 *The Early Quest for Identity*

During his formative years Daniel DeLeon crossed several geographical, linguistic, and cultural frontiers. He was born on December 14, 1852, on the island of Curaçao, a Dutch possession off the coast of Venezuela. His parents, Salomon DeLeon and Sarah Jesurun DeLeon, were descended from Sephardic Jews who had been exiled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century and had migrated to Holland and eventually to Curaçao. Salomon was a well-known physician in the region and served for a time as a military doctor at the Curaçao Garrison and Military Hospital. He died in 1865, when Daniel was only twelve, after a career that had taken him to Europe and various parts of South America. Sarah came from a wealthy, prominent family and was one of the most active members of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community on the island.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the religious instruction he received along with the other children of the Jewish community, Daniel received some of his early education at home from his father. However, Salomon departed Curaçao in 1857 to pursue his profession, and he was gone for several years, leaving his son to the care of Sarah and the boy's maternal uncle, Anjel Jesurun, a lawyer with scholarly inclinations. At that time Jesurun owned a plantation worked by sixty-nine slaves, and it is quite possible that Daniel lived there.<sup>2</sup>

In 1866, the youth was sent to Germany to be educated and to improve his chronic ill-health. After arriving at the port of Hamburg he underwent medical examination and then traveled to Hildesheim, in the Hartz Mountain region, where he enrolled in the local gymnasium and received additional medical attention.<sup>3</sup> His course of study was

classical, since all gymnasia in this period followed the *Lehrplan* set by Prussian ministerial authority. The *Lehrplan* heavily emphasized Latin, Greek, German, mathematics, French, history, and geography,<sup>4</sup> and the deep and wide-ranging knowledge in these subjects that DeLeon was later to display had its foundation in this experience.

At some point prior to 1870, DeLeon returned to Curaçao, for it is recorded that he went directly from there to Amsterdam, with his mother and several cousins, to enroll in the Athenaeum Illustre (now the University of Amsterdam) in September of that year. He studied medicine, but did not complete his course, once again returning to Curaçao in October 1872, with his mother and some of the cousins who had originally accompanied him.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly thereafter, he migrated to the United States, arriving sometime between 1872 and 1874, again accompanied or closely followed by his mother, who had relatives in their city of destination, New York.<sup>6</sup> DeLeon found few opportunities for work, but by 1874 he had located a position as an instructor of Latin, Greek, and mathematics at Thomas B. Harrington's School in Westchester, New York, where he remained until 1876.<sup>7</sup> From 1876 to 1878, he attended the School of Law of Columbia College, earning his LL.B. degree with honors in the latter year.

For a short period between 1878 and 1882, he practiced law in Brownsville, Texas, having gone there to explore the region as a possible permanent home for himself and other members of his family.<sup>8</sup> Finding Brownsville unsuitable, the young attorney went back to New York City and established a practice there. He opened his office in that city before August 1882, and he maintained it until at least 1884.

DeLeon traveled back to Curaçao in 1882 and married sixteen-year-old Sarah Lobo, a member of a prominent Jewish family.<sup>9</sup> The wide difference in the couple's ages (DeLeon was thirty at the time) and the fact that the groom seems to have been away from the island for several years prior to the marriage suggest that it was a traditional, arranged union. The marriage was brief and tragic: Sarah died in childbirth in 1887 along with twin infant sons; and in the same year another of their four children died at the age of one year.<sup>10</sup>

DeLeon returned to New York following his marriage, and shortly afterward he was appointed a prize lecturer in the School of Political Science of Columbia College, a post he held for two three-year terms from 1883 to 1889. At the same time he became increasingly involved

in reform and labor politics, a development that culminated in his joining the Socialist Labor Party in 1890. At that point the story of Daniel DeLeon as a major socialist figure begins.

Upon closer examination, these years of restless movement reveal a dominant motif recalling the accursed specter of the Wandering Jew. The "curse" affecting DeLeon was, as he perceived it, his Jewish identity, which had a burdensome "Legend of Malchus" quality that he first sensed as a student in Europe from 1866 to 1872. In this period, which saw the unifications of Germany and Italy, Europe seethed with a nationalistic fervor that resolved for many of the continent's peoples a collective identity crisis resulting from the demise of the ancien régime. For Jews, however, the era posed formidable problems. Although they benefited from the passing of a medieval order under which they had suffered restriction and prejudice, self-definition in national terms was difficult, because, unlike most other European nationalities, they lacked a distinctly secular culture and had no claim to a territory.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as a minority residing in the lands of others, they were easily stigmatized as an outgroup, and anti-Semitism often became the companion of national awakening.

Daniel DeLeon was deeply affected by the dilemma facing the Jews. As the product of a vital Curaçao Jewish community, he probably identified himself fully with Judaism, and because of that he felt all the more isolated.<sup>12</sup> Also, he was especially vulnerable to a feeling of alienation and insecurity at this time. Two brothers had died in an epidemic three years before he left for Europe, and he had lost his father a year before his departure. He did not himself enjoy good health, and he may have suffered a degree of culture shock upon being transported from the Caribbean to the heartland of Europe. And with a sensitivity heightened by his youth and his native intelligence, he would not have been in a position to parry this assortment of blows easily.<sup>13</sup>

A few scattered facts concerning DeLeon's two-year stay in Amsterdam indicate that he made an early effort to escape the implications of his marginal social position. In contrast to his life on Curaçao, he apparently did not participate in the community life of the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam.<sup>14</sup> However, young DeLeon braved what may very well have been a very harsh two-week initiation period to join the fraternity-like Amsterdams Studenten Corps, probably the only

student organization then operating at the university.<sup>15</sup> The corps quite possibly represented to him a nonethnic, nonreligious alternative in which to find a sense of belonging and involvement. Years later he recalled with fondness the camaraderie of student pranks,<sup>16</sup> which diverted him, if only fleetingly, from the crisis of identity he would ultimately have to confront.

Direct evidence of DeLeon's internal ferment over his Jewishness appeared in a two-and-a-half column letter he wrote to the *Reformer and Jewish Times* early in 1879,<sup>17</sup> some seven years after arriving in the United States and ten years before avowing his commitment to socialism. The letter was a rejoinder to a piece in the *Reformer* by Felix Adler, who had argued that Jews should abstain from Christmas festivities on the grounds that the holiday commemorates their sufferings and the birth of a man not recognized by them as the Savior.

DeLeon fully agreed that the Jews had indeed endured historic oppression, but his remarks reveal a note of defensiveness, mingled with proud ethnic indignation, and a clear perception of Jews as alien wanderers:

The pyre on which those devoted victims, those stalwart pioneers of a spiritual creed were placed, often blazed . . . petulant, bigoted rage . . . [vented itself] against the unarmed, the defenceless Jew . . . [Yet] amidst eloquent tongues of fire, the Jew asserted the superiority of his convictions and of his race above *the brutalized masses among which he sojourned*, and with his ashes and his own heart-blood recorded his protest against *the surrounding surges of heathenism*.

However, it did not serve to dwell on injustices "illustrative only of the spirit of . . . barbarism of the age in which they were perpetrated." The problem of the present was to resolve a gnawing crisis of identity, and to this end he proposed that "the advance guards of the Jews and Gentiles join hands together[, ] both agreeing upon the sublimity of the character of Jesus . . . while both repudiat[ing] the idea of his Jehovahship." In this fashion the centrality of Christ to the travail of a collective Ahasuerus would be avoided, permitting Jew and Gentile to celebrate Christmas together. Such a theological synthesis, with the integration of identity that it implied, was contrasted with Adler's suggestion that the Jews counterpose to Christmas the feast of Esther, which DeLeon described as "a factitious, . . . precarious feast . . . [that]

could hardly tend to anything else than to keep alive *painful reminiscences*, and to foment the . . . mutual hatred of races . . . stubbornly disposed on both sides." Rather, the Jew should be seen as "one of the elements out of which the future American type is to be formed," and thus he should observe Christmas along with the vast majority of his countrymen, thereby "contributing his share toward ushering in *that longed for era* when hostility between race and race shall cease, and the *amalgamation between them* shall be accomplished."<sup>18</sup>

"Amalgamation," or absorption into a larger national group, emerged as a personal solution to the pain of isolation that DeLeon seemed to experience acutely in this period. The powerful example of nationalism as a source of identity could scarcely have escaped his attention during his student days in Europe, and it is therefore not surprising that he would subsequently seek its embrace. Its influence revealed itself in a scholarly review DeLeon wrote while lecturing at Columbia. Disputing the contentions of the author under review regarding the diplomatic status of the Papacy vis-a-vis that of the young Italian state, he remarked:

The law of guaranty [giving the Papacy special status] is a derogation of the sovereignty of the Italian kingdom, and was but a compromise between the dignity and the safety of the young Italian national unity . . . The thought that a focus of hostility at the very heart of a nation can be a permanent institution, or that a nation can long exist with an impaired and divided sovereignty is contrary to the philosophy of history and repulsive to the science of international jurisprudence.<sup>19</sup>

Thus inspired by nationalism, but lacking genuine membership in a large, dynamic national entity, DeLeon first directed his loyalties to the nearest and most logical substitute—he "became" a Latin American.<sup>20</sup> As an originally Spanish-speaking<sup>21</sup> Sephardic Jew, he shared an Iberian cultural heritage with the citizens of Latin American countries, and his Curaçaoan home had placed him in close geographical proximity to them. Predictably, his first known political activity, begun shortly after his arrival in the United States in 1872, was to serve as associate editor of a paper published by Cuban exiles that advocated independence for one of the last bastions of European colonialism in Latin America.<sup>22</sup>

This Hispanic-American self-definition was reflected even in the places where DeLeon chose to live: at least as late as 1883, his New York home was, according to his son, "in the heart of a Spanish-speaking community"; and his brief and somewhat mysterious sojourn in Brownsville, Texas, is best explained by the fact that the city was a port on the Gulf of Mexico, presumably with numerous commercial and cultural links to Latin America, and, being not far from the Mexican border, it probably contained as well a sizable Latin population.<sup>23</sup>

DeLeon's Latin-American affinities, though, were most clearly evident during his academic career at Columbia. The only course he gave during the five years he taught there was a history of Latin American diplomacy, and apparently he was the first lecturer in an American university to offer such a course. DeLeon naturally regarded the subject as an extremely significant area of inquiry that had not received the attention it deserved. In reviewing a technical legal work for the *Political Science Quarterly* in 1886, DeLeon gave voice to these views. Worth "special notice," he believed, was the book's "recognition of the importance of the work of Latin-American statesmen and publicists in the domain of diplomacy and international jurisprudence." He continued:

In this, as in other matters, ignorance of the subject has led to the assumption of its non-existence; and writers on international law have hitherto passed over the labors of Latin-American publicists with hardly a word, if not in absolute silence. But the same causes that produced among the small republics of former days in the north of Italy a large body of able statesmen are to be found to-day in operation in Latin-America, and are there producing the same effects. International jurisprudence is pre-eminently the science which the precarious existence of Latin-American states causes to flourish among their people.<sup>24</sup>

DeLeon, however, was not only concerned with the slighting of Latin Americans in the academic realm. He also defended the Southern republics against colonial and neocolonial interference in their affairs, foreshadowing the forthright antiimperialist position he was to hold later as a socialist. Approximately half of the lectures in his course were devoted to "European interventions in Latin America" from 1833 to 1864; his scholarly writing made reference to the severe suffering inflicted on colonial Latin America by European wars; and his first involvement in American politics, as a pamphlet writer for the



mugwump opposition to James G. Blaine's 1884 presidential candidacy, was prompted by Blaine's policy on the Americas, which DeLeon saw as tending toward perpetual interventionism.<sup>25</sup>

Committed though he was to conscious self-immersion in a broadly conceived Spanish-American community, DeLeon also found himself attracted in these years to the vibrant national energy of Germany, which he had experienced firsthand. While he could not fully identify with the German nation, he indicated a desire to draw as close to it as possible. If he could not place himself within the matrix of the German spirit, he could at least reflect the warmth emanating from it. "Of all ethnic alloys which the people of this country receives [*sic*]," he wrote, "that which proceeds from Germany is the most valuable." Such sentiments, combined with the reciprocal esteem Germans accorded DeLeon for his high academic attainments, created a favorable context for his eventual movement into the heavily German Socialist Labor Party, and they also help to explain the subsequently deep and abiding respect he came to have for German Marxism, an admiration he retained well into the 1890s.<sup>26</sup>

DeLeon's admiration for German nationalism was most readily apparent in his comments about that towering personification of the German nation, Otto von Bismarck, who, in DeLeon's words, "aimed the unerring shafts of his diplomacy . . . from the commanding height he holds in the affairs of Europe." The young political scientist was particularly impressed by a speech the chancellor had delivered to the Reichstag, one he termed "significant" and "poetic." In the segment of the address quoted directly by DeLeon, Bismarck, using analogies drawn from German mythology, proudly recalled the nation's recent political unification under his leadership and pledged to "arraign at the bar of God and history" any who "would succeed in destroying . . . [that] magnificent work." Thus DeLeon was enthralled by the supreme architect of modern Germany, a "man who, overlooking no opportunity, and spurning no means which his genius may suggest or which accident may create, steadily pursues his life's aim of welding into one self-reliant and stable nation the German-speaking peoples."<sup>27</sup>

But the sense of belonging generated by the ascendant power of German unity could only be experienced vicariously, and a fabricated membership in a nebulous Latin American community of language and culture could not but ring false. The quest for an acceptable identity would, of necessity, have to assume other forms.

## 2 *University Years*

At the same time that DeLeon strove to create for himself a sustaining nationally defined identity, he was seeking a sense of place as well in the academic precincts of Columbia College. His first known association with the institution came when he entered its law school in 1876. Seemingly anxious at the outset to impress the authorities of this intellectual community with his worthiness for membership in it, DeLeon boldly falsified the particulars of his previous training, stating that he held A.M. and Ph.B. degrees from Leyden. Whatever the reason for this misrepresentation, it allowed him to circumvent the entrance examination required of nongraduates of "literary colleges," and his subsequent performance as a student gave his teachers little reason to doubt that he was indeed well prepared to pursue his studies. The school offered courses in the standard legal subjects—contracts, maritime and admiralty law, real estate and equity, criminal law, torts, medical jurisprudence, and the like—and DeLeon was probably exposed to all of them.<sup>1</sup>

However, judging from later developments in his academic career, he was most interested in Professor John W. Burgess's classes on constitutional history, international and constitutional law, and political science.<sup>2</sup> It is reasonable to assume that he became a member of Burgess's "seminar," a select group of volunteers from the regular course who had demonstrated a command of Latin, French, and German and "a high proficiency in the recitations and examinations of the regular course." These students were expected to present the results of individual investigations before meetings of the group. In pursuit of recognition and the acceptance that would follow, DeLeon entered the

competition for the class prizes in Constitutional History and Constitutional Law and the History of Diplomacy and International Law. Candidates had to take a special examination and to submit essays on topics designed to reveal the quality of their legal scholarship. Standards of assessment for the essays stressed "conciseness and clearness of expression, accuracy of statement, and close reasoning," and the student's "diligence and regularity of attendance upon the prescribed exercises of the School" were also taken into account. DeLeon won both competitions and was honored at his class commencement in May 1878 by Columbia President Frederick Barnard, who declared: "Your successful labors afford ground for the just expectation that you may find your place among the distinguished publicists of the age and the country."<sup>3</sup>

Thus encouraged, DeLeon evinced "great interest" when a separate School of Political Science under Burgess was established by Columbia in 1881. Also attracting the young law graduate's attention was an affiliated alumni-professional-faculty version of Burgess's seminar, the Academy of Political Science, which came into being shortly thereafter. In June 1882, at Professor Burgess's request, the new school received approval from the college Board of Trustees for the creation of a prize lectureship. This renewable three-year appointment was to be given to an active member of the Academy of Political Science who was either a graduate of the School of Political Science or a graduate of the Law School with two years of course work in political science. The school's faculty was charged with the responsibility for selecting the best candidate, the selection to be based in part on the quality of his scholarly work, and the faculty further prescribed that this "original work" consist of at least one paper presented before the academy during the year preceding the appointment. Once appointed, the lecturer was to deliver annually to his students a series of twenty lectures, "the result of original investigation," for which he would be paid the sum of five hundred dollars.<sup>4</sup>

The faculty was authorized to fill the position in June of the following year, and at that time it chose Daniel DeLeon.<sup>5</sup> DeLeon must have been well satisfied by this demonstration of acceptance by the academic community, a clear sign, it seemed, that his quest to belong had been rewarded.<sup>6</sup> The years of his first appointment went well. His third-year-level course on Latin American diplomacy was first given in the spring session of 1884, repeated in the fall session of that year,

and, apparently because of its success, regularly offered in both sessions from the fall of 1885 through the spring of 1889, when DeLeon left the faculty.<sup>7</sup> Professionally, DeLeon continued to involve himself in the work of the Academy of Political Science and was honored by election to its presidency and executive committee for the 1884-85 academic year. And when the *Political Science Quarterly* was initiated under academy control in 1886 for the purpose of publishing members' papers, the prize lecturer was among the first contributors. Because of his "splendid performance," the political science faculty nominated DeLeon for another prize lectureship in 1886 as the tenure of his first appointment drew to a close, and the trustees reappointed him.<sup>8</sup>

As the 1885-86 academic year ended, it appeared that Daniel DeLeon was well on his way to a successful academic career. However, the year 1886 in America saw a swelling tide of vibrant, mass-based, labor-oriented movements contesting local elections, and the city of New York witnessed one of the more serious of such campaigns, as the celebrated single-tax advocate, Henry George, sought to capture the mayor's office on a broad reform platform. In response to this reform activity, DeLeon was beginning to perceive the contemplative life, which he had so assiduously pursued, in a different light: as itself a type of isolation, a genteel cloister in a raw world where the abstract study of the political was but a pale surrogate for the real stuff of politics. That such disillusionment with academic life was indeed developing is suggested by his later recollections of first being drawn to the George insurgents.<sup>9</sup> Socialist Labor Party writer Olive Johnson paraphrased DeLeon's account thus:

In the spring of 1886 great labor disturbances took place in New York. The men on the horse cars struck . . . the workers were treated most brutally. DeLeon read about all this with great interest, but, as he said, not with any different interest than he read other sensational news . . .

Columbia College was then on Madison Avenue . . . One day DeLeon was sitting there together with a number of his colleagues. Suddenly there was a great noise . . . The street cars came in a row down the avenue. The workers had won. The group of professors hastened to the window and saw the parade go by. DeLeon's colleagues expressed during this procession so much contempt and scorn and even threats against the workers

that DeLeon felt his blood boil. His resentment and anger were aroused and in this temper he wrote offering his support to Henry George whom he had heard the workers were intending to nominate for mayor.<sup>10</sup>

In September, early in the campaign, DeLeon began speaking publicly in support of George's candidacy. The reaction of the Columbia administration was predictably one of anger and consternation. The institution was, after all, a pillar of the established order. Its law school provided a favorable climate for the training of such men as prominent New York financier and Republican leader Otto F. Barnard, well-known Democratic attorney Samuel Untermyer, and James G. Blaine's son, Walker—all of whom had been DeLeon's classmates.<sup>11</sup> And its School of Political Science was avowedly "designed to prepare young men for the duties of public life" and "to fit" them "for all the political branches of the public service,"<sup>12</sup> purposes hardly coincident with the social and political upheaval that the George forces seemed to represent.

Hence, when President Barnard learned, in his words, that "there appeared publicly on the [Georgeite] platform a man holding a petty position in our School of Political Science, who permitted himself to be announced as 'Professor DeLeon' of Columbia College," he acted quickly to end this "outrage" of "associat[ing] the name of Columbia College with . . . [a] monstrous agitation" which threatened to "overturn the entire structure of civilized society." At the beginning of October the administrator wrote a letter of complaint to DeLeon's immediate superior, Professor Burgess, asking that the latter "admonish" the young lecturer on the matter, and, according to Barnard, Burgess "expressed entire concurrence" with this course. A copy of Barnard's letter was forwarded to DeLeon, containing the President's "declaration that in case Mr. DeLeon should not sever himself at once from this pernicious agitation, I should feel it my duty to recommend to the Board of Trustees to discontinue his connection with the college." At first it seemed that the warning had had its intended effect. Barnard noted that DeLeon's role in the campaign became less conspicuous for a few weeks. Possibly, this threat made him aware of the fact that, for him, the academic and political roads to redemption were incompatible and that a choice would have to be made. If so, he chose politics, for he defied the president toward the end of October

by chairing an on-campus meeting of the Henry George Club of the Alumni of Columbia College, which the candidate himself addressed. Barnard then wrote to the chairman of the Board of Trustees, completely outlining the facts of the case and seeking his agreement to a motion of dismissal to be presented at the next meeting of the trustees.<sup>13</sup>

The president must have received a positive reply from board chairman Hamilton Fish, since he introduced the following resolution at the Trustees' November 1 meeting:

WHEREAS, Daniel DeLeon, a lecturer in the School of Political Science of this College, has recently presented himself, or permitted himself to be presented, before public audiences in this city, in the character of a professor of Columbia College, and in such character has made himself an active champion of a movement which is regarded by this body as menacing the destruction of the existing order of civilized society, and has thus, so far as in him lay, exposed the College to reproach and endangered its honorable reputation, therefore, in order that this Board may express its emphatic disapproval and condemnation of the course of the said officer,

*Resolved*, That Daniel DeLeon, Lecturer in the School of Political Science, be dismissed from his said office of Lecturer, and that this resolution take effect immediately.<sup>14</sup>

However, cooler heads prevailed; the resolution was laid on the table.<sup>15</sup> A majority of the trustees may have felt that such a gross violation of academic freedom would have been an embarrassment to the college. Perhaps, too, they shrewdly reasoned that making a martyr of DeLeon just prior to the election could only aid the cause of Henry George. In any case, while he escaped summary dismissal at this point, his involvement in the campaign and his continued active participation in reform politics after the election precluded his ever becoming a regular member of the Columbia teaching staff. Although the official historian of the School of Political Science maintains that the faculty "accorded DeLeon the respect due a colleague" and "acknowledged that it was not on the basis of current political issues that DeLeon had been chosen as a prize lecturer,"<sup>16</sup> the conclusion seems unavoidable that DeLeon was eased out of his position because the school's gray eminences disapproved of his politics. Despite the fact that he had demonstrated considerable ability as a scholar and a

teacher, he was not, as would normally have been the case, offered a professorship when his second prize-lectureship expired, but was simply invited to apply for another. In view of the fact that a younger man, E. R. A. Seligman, was appointed to a professorship in 1888 after having been a prize lecturer for only five years, it would appear that the school was subtly but unmistakably suggesting to DeLeon that he was no longer wanted. If so, he took the hint and left the faculty in disgust at the conclusion of the spring session of 1889.<sup>17</sup>

As his colleagues and the administration were making their displeasure with him known, DeLeon's disillusionment with academe and his corresponding attraction to reform politics grew apace, the former at times being expressed in terms of the latter. The university was no longer a place where a satisfying sense of belonging could be found, nor could a search for identity in the mass realm of reform politics proceed effectively within its ivied walls. Writing in 1887 to the more conservative Seligman, DeLeon asserted that

The lecture-room, even if it were crowded, is not the place to combat the baseless fallacies you say the [Georgeite] United Labor Party advocates: you must remember that Victor Hugo was brought up by Jesuits; that Luther was trained a Roman Catholic monk; that Washington was a colonel in a British army; that Bolivar was a graduate of a university in Spain. Somehow or other pupils are not always, nor even generally, disciples; besides the times are too stirring & pregnant, to expect much good from the slow process of pedagogy.<sup>18</sup>

Having come to such conclusions in the aftermath of the election, DeLeon embarked on an intensive study of socialist literature and ceased preparing new lectures for his classes.<sup>19</sup> As his identification with socialism emerged, his doubts about the academic community hardened into an implacable hostility, and when writing or lecturing for the movement he rarely missed an opportunity to assail academe and academicians. One of the better things that could be said of American founding father James Madison, according to an admiring DeLeon, was that he was "no sycophantic pedagogue talking for place or pelf." In a May Day speech less than a year after he left Columbia, he averred that professors who, "at the command of our plutocracy," taught capitalist "fallacies" deserved "ridicule and odium" for revealing themselves to be so "ignorant" and "subservient." And when addressing striking textile workers in 1898, he advised his audience not

to shy away from the subjects of political economy and sociology, for "it is only the capitalist professors who try to make them so difficult of understanding that the very mentioning of them is expected to throw the workingman into a palpitation of the heart."<sup>20</sup>

Nor did the former prize lecturer stay at the level of generalities when discoursing on what he regarded as a "sham of education," one that produced "empty parvenues with no understanding for art, and letters, and sciences, buying paintings like cattle or stocks, judging from the standpoint of dollars, not inner ripeness for appreciation." Individual academics were often scathingly called to account for their errors. After attending an 1893 lecture on the labor question by Professor Francis Peabody of Harvard, DeLeon commented that while the speaker "showed some acquaintance with the names of economic writers such as Gronlund and Mill and also with Carlyle . . . his acquaintance with any of this did not, however, extend much, if at all, beyond the title pages of their books," this becoming "more and more painfully apparent as the professor proceeded in his lecture." *Daily People* editorials with titles like "And This Is a Professor" (May 3, 1902), "Professor Eliotiana" (February 3, 1903), and "Chase That Professor!" (July 25, 1910) further displayed the delight DeLeon took in twitting members of the academic fraternity. Respectively therein, Professor E. S. Meade of the University of Pennsylvania was scored for uttering "stupidities" belonging "to the stone age of economics"; Harvard's Professor Eliot was deemed guilty of "Eliotic . . . unction"; and Dean Joseph French Johnson of the New York University School of Commerce, Accounts, and Finance was depicted as an unwitting humorist in his simplistic attempt to explain "Why Prices Are High." When Oxford University professor W. H. Mallock toured the United States lecturing on the supposed fallacies in Marx, DeLeon responded with his own lecture in 1908 in which Marxian texts were used forcefully to refute the refuter, while Canadian political economist O. D. Skelton's *Socialism: A Critical Analysis* (1912) brought forth a resounding barrage of *Daily People* editorials that ran in the paper for nearly three months.<sup>21</sup>

Not confining his attack solely to teachers, DeLeon cast a jaundiced eye as well on the typical university student: "The social throbbings that make for a higher order of things leave him cool, indifferent, if not apathetic . . . No face in audiences held by the labor movement bears the cynic's mark more challengingly than the student's." Hence,



University of Missouri undergraduates who petitioned their faculty to reduce their daily meals from three to two, presumably to aid the school's budgetary position, were sneeringly referred to as "goody-goody," and utter disgust was expressed at Yale students, who, "glorying in the badge of 'scab,' jumped in to take the places of striking drivers."<sup>22</sup>

DeLeon was probably at his most sardonic, however, when writing about Columbia and its staff members. The institution was pronounced "the most reactionary college" in New York, one which "teaches the dogma of cooliedom for the toiling masses and mandarinism for the idle capitalist." It exemplified "the monstrosity of private corporations of learning," being just another of a family of monopolies "run to suit the private and to the nation disastrous whims, caprices and INTERESTS of their owners." When Seth Low, Frederick Barnard's successor, addressed a meeting on unemployment, DeLeon identified him as "the ex-cornerer of coffee, and now President of Columbia College, where the vulgar and false economics of capitalism are taught," and he acidly observed that "the audience patiently submitted to the affliction of his vapid oratory and heaved a sigh of relief when he sat down." Former School of Political Science colleague Munroe Smith was ridiculed for issuing a fund-raising circular addressed to the wealthy, his appeal interpreted for *Daily People* readers thus: "'Share with us your wealth; it is a good investment; you will need the blockheads whom we cultivate; if we do not addle the brains out of these youths where would you be; shell out!'" And the appearance of economic historian Vladimir G. Simkhovitch's tome, *Marxism versus Socialism*, launched DeLeon on a gleeful sortie in which the work was variously described as a "mass of . . . rubbish" and a "veritable garbage barrel of alleged science."<sup>23</sup>

Unquestionably, DeLeon turned on the academic world with a vengeance. But his bitterness was the bitterness of hope disappointed. He had sought a place, a home, in the academy and had found it wanting. Nevertheless it left its indelible imprint on him, its style and manner, and some of its ideals became integral to him. Such can be noted in the nature and structure of many of the addresses he gave during his career in the movement. Replete with classical allusions, literary references, scientific analogies, and reams of statistics, they frequently bore a close resemblance, in all but message, to college lectures. Passages occurring here and there in the texts of these speeches strengthen

the resemblance even further. In the opening moments, for instance, of his well-known 1896 address *Reform or Revolution*, DeLeon carefully but simply defined his terms, much as he might have if introducing a subject to undergraduates:

I shall go back to basic principles . . . in explaining to you the difference . . . between Reform and Revolution . . .

I shall assume—it is a wise course for a speaker to adopt—that none in this audience knows what is ‘Reform’ and what is ‘Revolution.’ Those who are posted will understand me all the better; those who are not will follow me all the easier . . . Let us clear up our terms. Reform means a change of externals; Revolution—peaceful or bloody, the peacefulness or the bloodiness of it cuts no figure whatever in the essence of the question—means a change from within.

In the same manner, his opening statement in a speech on women’s suffrage outlined for his “students” the course his discussion would take, promising a “systematic treatment of a complicated subject—by first analytically considering its several parts, then synthetically bringing them together.” And at three later points in his remarks he called attention in passing to what he regarded to be subjects worthy of more intensive scholarly treatment, inviting his listeners to undertake the work in the style of a professor suggesting term paper topics to his class.<sup>24</sup>

There was something a bit incongruous about a revolutionary message being preached to workers in such measured, didactic tones. It pointed up one of the many paradoxes produced in DeLeon by the clash of dissimilar elements in his experience, one element being anchored in a rapidly receding past, while the other reached out anxiously for the future. One is reminded of Ahasuerus, whose epic life span might well have presented the problem of assimilating an increasingly varied past to a future of seemingly infinite duration. DeLeon’s solution, here as elsewhere, was to forge a synthesis bridging the gap between dissimilarities. The basis for it was a redefinition of the university, which was fully and explicitly enunciated in a 1905 editorial<sup>25</sup> that attempted to explain the contrast between the conservatism and quiescence of American students and the revolutionary ardor then being expressed by their Russian counterparts. Although he allowed that “what is commonly called the American ‘college’ or ‘university’ is

the stamping-ground of the youth of the identical class whose youth makes up the universities of Europe," DeLeon recognized that "in the America of today the student class presents, as a whole, the exact opposite to his European fellow." The explanation he offered was that Russia and America stood at different stages of historical development: Russia was undergoing its bourgeois revolution and "shaking off the shackles of feudal rule," while in America, such "fire" had been rendered "a burnt-out coal" by the American Revolution. Consequently, DeLeon argued that "the bulk of the youth in our colleges . . . stand to the approaching Socialist Revolution of America in the identical relation that the reactionary students in Russia stand today to their revolutionary classmates." He concluded, therefore, that:

He who would look for the revolutionary youth of America must look for it in America's revolutionary class—the workingman; he who would look for the real colleges and universities of the land must look to the academies in which the workingman is trained—the classconscious trade union and the Socialist Labor Party . . .

The real American universities and colleges of today are not the scattered buildings said to be of learning, and that go by these names. Infinitely of vaster proportions and reared upon national bases are the universities and colleges that are today kindling the flame needed to light the torch for the next further step in civilization; and the classes that these colleges and universities address are to the ones lectured at the old style colleges and universities like the sands of the ocean to the gravel of a puddle.

By thus defining the true university, not in terms of a specific institutional apparatus or geographical location, but rather in terms of its relationship to the knowledge impelling human progress, DeLeon made possible the creation of a role for himself that successfully synthesized the academic and political poles of his being. Defrocked by the ruling class, he would be a professor to the proletariat. Rejected by the "old style" university, he would seek his place in the new.

### 3 *Political Evolution*

One can only speculate on why DeLeon came to perceive his personal redemption in political terms. Certainly, as he had written to E. R. A. Seligman, the times were "stirring & pregnant." The industrialization of America had produced great and perplexing social issues that could be expected to engage minds, especially the minds of those who were striving to locate themselves in the kaleidoscope. Possibly DeLeon's classical training also had something to do with it. He would have been quite familiar with the notion in Greek philosophy of the *polis*, a community based on political participation in the broadest sense. In any case, once set upon a political course, DeLeon was not to be diverted from it.

However, he moved toward his ultimate revolutionary vocation only by degrees. The years prior to 1890 revealed several incremental ideological shifts for which DeLeon later felt obliged to account. In an address delivered in 1902, he admitted "that when one joins a movement of this magnitude, with all the natural greenness that I did in 1886, he, after a few years of activity, finds it necessary to wipe out a good many of the notions he came with, and a good many of the impressions he gathered at the start. And so it was in my case."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he elsewhere reminded potential critics that "even the keen minded Franklin made no less than three trips to England in the sincere belief that peace could be patched up between Crown and Colonists," and he asserted that "to change, provided such change be in the line of progress, not in the line of retrogression or capers, is honorable."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, DeLeon's "line of progress" covered a considerable distance.

He began as a virtually empty vessel, disposed toward change but vague on the what, why, and how of the matter. In his 1879 letter to the *Reformer and Jewish Times*, he digressed from the subject of Jewish observance of Christmas to defend his rather nebulous reform position from the anticipated taunts of "the rabid orthodox," who would claim that he "*only breaks down but builds not up again.*" He exclaimed that

error must be fought for its own sake, and wherever met, without stopping to consider if we have positive truth to substitute for it . . . Is the pioneer who cuts down trees . . . to clear a path through the woods, or the blaster who opens a tunnel . . . to facilitate travel, is either of them expected to fill up again the open space they have created? They have broken down with the deliberate purpose not to build up again. And no more is it the case with the reformer. His time is too precious to undo what he has done, and when he upsets institutions that have outlived the purpose for which they were created, he removes those obstructions in the path of progress, and he takes a care not to build up new ones, but to leave the highways free and unobstructed for the onward march of civilization.<sup>3</sup>

In 1884, the vessel began to fill as DeLeon joined in the Republican Independent, or mugwump, campaign against the G.O.P. presidential standard-bearer, James Gillespie Blaine. An elite regiment of gentlemen, the mugwumps were opposed to the crass spoils politics of the Gilded Age and advanced a program calling for greater economy in government, civil service reform, tariff reduction, maintenance of the gold standard, and honesty in politics. They gave their wholehearted support to Blaine's opponent, Democrat Grover Cleveland, who, as mayor of Buffalo and governor of New York, had earned a reputation for integrity. DeLeon contributed at least one pamphlet to the cause, an eight-page tract entitled *A Specimen of Mr. Blaine's Diplomacy: Is He a Safe Man to Trust as President?* which was published by the New York-based National Committee of Republicans and Independents, the most active group in the country. And his enthusiasm for Cleveland was such that he could still name a son after the mugwump champion two years later.<sup>4</sup>

DeLeon's adherence to the Independent movement was a direct outgrowth of his effort at this time to identify with university life at Columbia. Immersion in the university entailed identification with the

genteel social elite whose style, values, and manners the institution faithfully mirrored. Politically speaking, this meant supporting Cleveland and espousing mugwump ideals, the anti-Blaine insurgency being almost exclusively an agitation of the well-educated, well-placed, and well-to-do "best men" of the city. Indeed, the purposes of Columbia's School of Political Science, where DeLeon taught, and the reasons given by mugwumps for their reform activity derived from a common noblesse oblige ideology. "The School's avowed function," its historian has stated, was preparing its well-bred young men "to exercise an intelligent and effective influence on American public affairs," while the mugwumps believed "that college graduates were an educated elite and that because the maintenance of public standards necessarily lay with such men, they had an obligation to prevent the control of public affairs from falling into the hands of 'selfish and ignorant or crafty and venal men.'"<sup>5</sup> In effect, both manifestations of mugwumpery reflected a desire to extend into the political process the upper-class world-view predominant in the university. This was to be accomplished by broadening the definition of "education" to include "educat[ing] the public to its civic responsibilities."<sup>6</sup> Although DeLeon did not tarry long in the company of this curious band of gentlemen-reformers, his experience with it influenced him in two important respects. First, a "genteel" civics approach to reform and radical politics was permanently added to the increasing burden of anomalies and paradoxes borne by this Ahasuerus as he traversed an ever-varied landscape. And second, one can discern in the mugwump conception of the university graduate's civic responsibilities the seed of DeLeon's later synthesis of the roles of the academic and the revolutionary.

As DeLeon grew dissatisfied with his academic self-definition, however, his exclusive commitment to the mugwump style of politics diminished accordingly. By 1886, his quest for an acceptable identity had carried him into the United Labor Party campaign to make Henry George mayor of New York. George himself was a latter-day agrarian individualist in the tradition of Jefferson who had established an international reputation as the author of the widely read treatise *Progress and Poverty*. In that book George identified the root cause of the increasing disparity between rich and poor to be the monopolization of land, and he therefore proposed the panacea of a 100 percent tax on all rents—in effect, public ownership of rental property. This simple "single-tax" remedy for the woes of industrialization fired the imagi-

nations of tens of thousands of readers and made George a natural choice to lead New York's reform forces. Seeking maximum mobilization of these forces, the United Labor Party adopted a platform, which, while it bore the stamp of the mayoral candidate's physiocratic doctrine, appealed also to a wide spectrum of interests. Consequently, a diverse coalition gathered about the candidate, including socialists, trade unionists, single-taxers, antimonopolists, intellectuals, middle-class reformers, and land-sensitive Irish immigrants. The party did well in the election, with George finishing a strong second to Tammany candidate Abram Hewitt, but it foundered the following year on factionalism, as George feuded with the organization's socialist and labor contingents. The result was a rupture that sent the movement into permanent decline.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, while the ULP was a going concern, Daniel DeLeon was indefatigably active in it. He had been a delegate to the party's founding convention and had served as a member of its three-man committee of organization. He was on the committee that formally nominated George and was one of the speakers at the fateful Chickerling Hall meeting in October where the nomination was endorsed by a large throng of New York professional people. During the campaign he regularly addressed rallies and other gatherings as a party spokesman, and, to the chagrin of Columbia's President Barnard, wrote "lead articles" for the ULP's official organ. In addition, he found time to work as president of the Henry George Club of the Alumni of Columbia College and as a member of the Anti-Poverty Society, an organization designed to provide support for the single-tax priest, Father Edward McGlynn, in his struggle with conservative hierarchical superiors. Not surprisingly, the *New York World*, in its extensive coverage of the campaign, listed DeLeon as one of the city's most prominent George proponents. Nor did his activism abate in the year following the election. He continued to play a leading role as a member of the ULP's New York General County Committee and as chairman of its platform committee. However, by 1888 DeLeon's enthusiasm for the cause had waned. Such was indicated by his failure to stand for reelection to the County Committee in that year and by the fact that he was by then no longer mentioned in the party press. DeLeon's emergence early in 1889 as a single-tax critic heralded the end of his Georgeite phase.<sup>8</sup>

Historians have tended to view 1886 as a turning point in DeLeon's

life, interpreting his participation in the George campaign as clear evidence of his conversion to labor radicalism.<sup>9</sup> In this they have taken their cue from DeLeon himself, who later, as a socialist, felt a need to invest the year with such significance. Consequently when recalling the events of the period, he spoke of "the Labor Movement" drawing him to it with the dramatic suddenness of a "cat's paw," the implication being that he had covered the considerable distance separating the academy from the labor movement in one great vault. To make this rendering of the past credible he found it necessary to disassociate himself retroactively from Henry George and the bourgeois heresy he represented. Hence, during DeLeon's socialist years George and his lieutenants were denounced as "nothing but common and unprincipled wire-pullers"; the movement they had led was scornfully dismissed as a "charlatan boom"; and single-tax doctrine was attributed to "half-antiquated, half-idiotic reasoning," and was therefore deemed "a semi-economic lie" and "a broken reed to lean on."<sup>10</sup>

But such aggressive posturing had its difficulties for one who had once labored diligently for George and the ULP, as could be seen from an episode occurring some two years after DeLeon had soured on them. After completing a lecture in favor of Bellamyite Nationalism, the movement currently claiming his loyalties, DeLeon was confronted by a few single-taxers in the audience who took exception to critical remarks he had made during the course of the lecture about the *Progress and Poverty* gospel. They objected, according to a press account of the meeting, that "the whole movement to-day owed its existence to George and the single tax." While not denying the pioneering role played by the ULP, DeLeon disputed whether the single tax had been a part of its program at the outset and claimed that the subsequent introduction of George's theory had actually precipitated the party's collapse, at which point, said DeLeon, "George went overboard and rushed to hide his diminished head in the garbage barrel of the Democratic party."<sup>11</sup>

But that did not end the matter. Two weeks later a letter from single-taxer George K. Lloyd was published in the *Workmen's Advocate*, where DeLeon's debate with George's supporters had been reported. Lloyd identified himself as an early activist in the ULP and asserted that the single tax had indeed been a key element in its platform and that "the Professor [i.e. DeLeon] was one of the most ardent exponents of the single tax theory after he became a member of the party." De-



Leon's inevitable reply was not long in coming, a lengthy letter from him appearing in the paper's next issue. Declaring "pointedly" that he "never was an exponent of the single tax, most ardently or otherwise," he endeavored to explain away the embarrassing fact of his earlier support of George. This he did by claiming to have been duped, by arguing that the candidate had misrepresented himself. *Progress and Poverty*, stated DeLeon, seemed at first to transcend the "deficiencies and economic fallacies" of classic renditions of single-tax theory and to offer "some new matter that looked out of gear with the single tax proper and that seemed to point to a higher, sounder theory." Approving references in the book to Lassalle and the frequent use therein of radical-sounding phrases had, he said, led him to the false conclusion that George was "at least a land nationalizer and landlord expunger with vague, yet ultimate, socialistic tendencies," an "impression Mr. George himself carefully cultivated by word and deed among his supporters during the campaign of 1886." George was supported, then, not as a single-taxer, DeLeon maintained, but as an incipient socialist. However, after the campaign, according to him, George began to show his true bourgeois colors, and as a result he, along "with a host of others, stepped off from what we had been cheated into believing was to be a land nationalizing campaign, and switched back into the main channel of the labor or social movement." Having in his own mind successfully cleansed his record of any single-tax taint, DeLeon leveled a parting shot at the Georgeites' pet theory for good measure:

[As] soon as the term single tax shall convey to him [Lloyd] a distinct idea, inclusive of all that is of its essence, . . . he will then need one of Edison's 1000 volt electric jets to find any logic whatever in the stupid thing while a simple tallow candle will reveal to him scores of doctrines by which the single tax makes directly against every principle which I have reason to believe Mr. Lloyd and his honest fellow laborers hold dear.<sup>12</sup>

DeLeon's disavowals notwithstanding, however, the fact remains that George K. Lloyd was right: "the Professor" was a single-tax adherent from 1886 until 1888. Such, for example, was revealed in a campaign speech DeLeon gave in October 1886, when he thundered that the "large land owner is the worst element in this city" and then read verbatim a typical lease clause to demonstrate the disadvantaged

position of the tenant under the prevailing land monopoly. Driving his point home, he asserted:

When that clause is signed, what cares the landlord? Riot, plunder, disturbance, even occupation of our city by a foreign foe, may come: what cares the landlord? He will not have to bear his due share of the damage. If such a breaking out occurred here as did in Paris during the Revolution, according to our law it is a riot, and the city would have to pay for the damage while the landlords were, perhaps, living in Paris.

Confident of the intellectual soundness of the land tax remedy, which he described as "the first & foremost plank on our platform," DeLeon tried to arrange a public debate on the question that would pit academic critics of the single-tax against its ULP proponents. Moreover, he was quite willing himself to carry the message into potentially hostile forums, as evidenced by his efforts to promote George's political economy among skeptical, socialistically inclined Jewish workers. And in 1887, when the single-taxers and the socialists began to struggle for control of the ULP, DeLeon sided with the former, sitting on the platform among the Georgeites during a climactic, "showdown" debate between George and socialist leader Sergius Schevitsch and subsequently signing a manifesto that supported the position of the George faction.<sup>13</sup>

As such devotion to the doctrines of Henry George attests, DeLeon was still basically a polite reformer, not a labor radical. His activism at this time can most accurately be characterized as an extension of the mugwump political style. The United Labor Party was, after all, a socially heterogeneous movement whose radicalism was grossly exaggerated by the frightened conservative elements arrayed against it. The party actually drew considerable support from middle-class reformers who were attracted by Henry George's advocacy of honesty and integrity in government and the enshrinement of that mugwump ideal in the party platform. The single tax also appealed to this group because it promised change without class conflict and fundamental social upheaval: the only problem it concentrated upon was land monopoly, about which there supposedly existed a harmony of interest between entrepreneur and worker, and which could be corrected by the comparatively minor surgery of rent expropriation. Hence, the list of those who rallied without hesitation to the ULP banner could

include such paragons of respectable reform as Reverend John W. Kramer, Reverend R. Heber Newton, Father Edward McGlynn (like DeLeon, a former Cleveland supporter), Professor David B. Scott, Professor Thomas Davidson, Charles F. Wingate, James Redpath, and Gideon J. Tucker.<sup>14</sup>

That DeLeon responded to the movement on this basis—rather than out of some spontaneous affinity for the proletariat—is clear from his own words and actions. As noted earlier, he freely advertised himself as a Columbia College professor when speaking and writing for the party, an indication that he saw himself as properly belonging to the middle-class professional segment of George's following.<sup>15</sup> In addition, his campaign speeches reflected mugwump concerns. During the same October address cited above, for instance, he opined that:

It does not often fall to the lot of an American to have an opportunity of speaking in support of a man who, if elected, will give us government of the people, for the people, and by the people. We are now going before the people upon an issue; not upon twaddle, but upon truth; not upon platitudes, but upon principles which enlist the manhood of every decent citizen . . . We have hitherto been ruled in this city by a small minority that have no interest whatever in our welfare. They are professional politicians whose headquarters are in the rum and grog shops, with points of vantage in the slums of our city, recruiting their strength from the criminal classes and in time swelling the ranks of those classes. These fellows do not care who is the nominee so long as he has money, and they await the result of all elections as the hungry wolves await carrion, for that is the time when their riotous carnival comes. It is not what brains, or what common sense or what capacity for government a man has, but what boodle he has . . . We have not had one honest Mayor during my residence of fifteen years in this city, and if Henry George be elected, we shall have made a beginning.<sup>16</sup>

Several months later DeLeon further revealed his essentially genteel orientation by repeating his expression of disdain for "the slums of our city" in a letter to colleague E. R. A. Seligman. He proudly remarked of the membership of the United Labor Party that: "Among them there is no riff-raff. The slums, as you surely have gathered from the official returns, did not go with that party; &, as you may judge, the 25,000 votes which according to good authority are controlled by the

police & are cast in this city by the criminal class, were not cast for Henry George." Even late in his single-tax period, moreover, and in a context that certainly would have elicited ringing words of social revolution if there were any to be said, DeLeon remained the mug-wump, his attention focused on the debasement of governmental institutions. The occasion was a rally called in October 1887 to protest the death sentences that had recently been meted out to the anarchists accused of the Haymarket bombing, and DeLeon, in offering his reasons for participating, demonstrated how far he still was from a truly radical perspective. "I come here deliberately and for the good name of our beloved country," he announced, "that its proud record shall not be bloodstained by a judicial crime as the one contemplated in Chicago."<sup>17</sup>

Surprisingly, in view of the fervor with which he had committed himself to the United Labor Party movement, DeLeon drifted away from it after less than two years in its ranks. Why he did is implicit in a few general remarks he made subsequently about its failure. "The Henry George movement . . . only helped . . . to dispirit people in the end," he observed in *Reform or Revolution*, for: "great expectations were raised all over the country—for a while . . . But down came Humpty Dumpty, and all the king's horses and all the king's men could not now put Humpty Dumpty together again. Thus the volume of popular disappointment and diffidence received a further contribution." And elsewhere, he stated that despite their promising beginning, the George forces had remained "isolated" and eventually "melted clean away."<sup>18</sup> DeLeon had looked upon the United Labor Party as a means of escape from the bane of isolation that had followed him since his youth. When the movement failed to sustain its initial momentum, however, breaking on the shoals of factionalism and thereafter declining in potency, its appeal for him dissipated. An isolated political organization that gave no indication of any potential for further growth had no more merit in DeLeon's eyes than an isolated ivory tower or an isolated ethnic group. None could satisfy the persistent yearning he had to feel himself an integral part of a large, encompassing entity, one that could offer a reassuring sense of identity and personal meaning in an era of few solid moorings.

If the single tax itself did not serve for long as the vehicle of redemption, it did afford the context in which DeLeon acquired the intellectual sustenance to continue his odyssey. His ULP experience brought

him into contact for the first time with socialists, who stimulated him to undertake a serious study of left-wing literature.<sup>19</sup> From a later vantage point, after having thus steeped himself and having come thereby to a new political creed, DeLeon glared retrospectively at the man he had backed in 1886 and concluded that "by degrees Mr. George shifted his ground, until finally he now turns out to be a full-fledged capitalist."<sup>20</sup> However, it only appeared that George had "shifted his ground." It was in fact DeLeon who had been in movement, passing George as he approached the line separating reform from revolution.

DeLeon's next significant political involvement came in the spring of 1889 when he entered the Nationalist movement. The movement was spawned by Edward Bellamy's extremely popular and influential utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, published in 1888. The work depicted a blissful future commonwealth that had solved all of the problems besetting industrial society in the 1880s by instituting public ownership and control of its economic resources, tightly organizing its populace into efficient, quasimilitary formations, and substituting the cooperative for the competitive principle as the dominant ethic of social life. The change was accomplished peacefully, the result of an evolutionary process: when the wealth of the society had become concentrated in the hands of a very few, the majority, acting democratically through the political process, simply ushered in the new order. The activities of radicals and labor organizations, with their narrow class bias, had not contributed to this achievement but had only served to retard progress toward it. Rather, a "Nationalist Party," appealing to the best instincts of all classes of the nation, brought forth the millennium.<sup>21</sup>

*Looking Backward* made a profound impression on its large readership, which was enchanted by its reverse-image of the problem-ridden social system of that time. Especially affected were socially conscious members of the urban middle class and the urban patriciate. These people viewed with trepidation a growing polarization along class lines in the United States and feared the consequences of an eventual cataclysm that would find them trapped between an irresponsible plutocracy and a militantly class-conscious proletariat. To them, Bellamy's book projected a course of peaceful but thoroughgoing reform that could reverse the alarming trend toward sharp social stratification by harmonizing class interests on an ethical basis.

Beginning in Boston in 1888, Nationalist clubs sprang up all over

the country, dedicated to establishing in America the kind of society envisioned in *Looking Backward*. This movement, despite its desire to emulate the multiclass party in the book, received its principal support, predictably, from the more comfortable, respectable elements in society, and its local clubs frequently had very distinguished membership rosters. The founding club in Boston, for example, counted as members Edward Everett Hale, William Dean Howells, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Hamlin Garland, Julia Ward Howe, Frances E. Willard, and Laurence Gronlund. Those who, along with DeLeon, organized New York's first club included philosopher Thomas Davidson (also a veteran of United Labor Party work); General Abner Doubleday, the inventor of baseball; reform journalist Imogene Fales; and later well-known social worker Florence Kelley. The polite character of the movement was underscored by the fact that its spokesmen offered no apology for its essentially bourgeois social composition; on the contrary, they were quite proud that Nationalism was so congenial to "the best people." In keeping with this orientation, little effort was made to attract members from among the poor and the working class, and a discreet distance from unions was maintained.

As a basically genteel group, the Nationalists' approach to utopia-building was characteristically piecemeal and gradualist. Eschewing independent political action and declining to adopt a unified political and economic program, they preferred agitating for specific reforms on the state and local level. Among the changes typically sought by them were public ownership of utilities, pure food and drug legislation, tighter regulation of child labor, and greater democracy in government. However, lacking a distinct program and devoid of a strong organizational structure, the Nationalist phenomenon quickly dissipated its energies and was a spent force just four years after its inception.<sup>22</sup>

Earlier, though, while Nationalism was still in its ascendancy, Daniel DeLeon had been one of its most devoted proponents. From the spring of 1889 through the autumn of 1890, he contributed in every way he could to the movement's development. Indeed, rarely did an issue of the official organ, the *Nationalist*, go to press without reporting some facet of his activity in the movement's behalf. Helping to organize clubs, writing for Nationalist journals, frequently speaking and debating in favor of Bellamyite ideals and specific reform proposals, DeLeon at times worked himself literally to the point of ex-

haustion, as is emphasized by an item in the *Nationalist* describing the first anniversary celebration of the founding of the Boston club. The item read: "It was much regretted that Professor DeLeon, of New York, who spoke after Bellamy did not make a longer address, but he was fatigued from his exertions of the afternoon, when at the meeting of the representatives of the different clubs he made an eloquent and scientific address on the growth and present status of the movement for social reform in all countries."<sup>23</sup>

For all his frenetic activity in its service, Nationalism was only to be a conduit through which DeLeon would pass to a more permanent home in the Socialist Labor Party. Entering the movement as a genteel reformer beginning to absorb socialist ideas, he would leave it as a Marxist, trailing only a residue of the polite politics to which he had hitherto committed himself. Nationalism, with its decentralized pattern of organization and its casualness toward doctrinal niceties, proved a fertile medium for the germination and growth in DeLeon's mind of a comprehensive Marxian world-view. He himself suggested the pivotal role played by Bellamyism in his own development as a socialist when offering an assessment of its contribution generally to the history of the "Social Question" in America. He wrote:

Epoch-making . . . was the book of Edward Bellamy, 'Looking Backward'—a curious work on social science, seeing its teachings were threaded with a love story; a unique romance, seeing it was essentially sociologic. Down to the Nationalist Movement, to which 'Looking Backward' gave the impulse in 1889, . . . the motion presented by the . . . [Social Question] bore two characteristics—the distinct note of revolution, and glaring crudity of thought. The Nationalist Movement was the connecting link between the crude, tho' Revolutionary Past, and the Revolutionary, but no longer crude, Present. The difference consisted in the Marxism that stamps the present.<sup>24</sup>

That Nationalism was indeed "the connecting link" to revolution for DeLeon becomes evident upon examining more closely the course he followed after his ardor for Henry George had cooled. A truly Marxist perspective emerged only very gradually and then did not so much displace as merge with the older reformism, creating a rather strange amalgam in which socialism was definitely the dominant but still not the only element.

In 1888, the year he dropped from sight as a United Labor Party leader, DeLeon joined a local assembly of the Knights of Labor.<sup>25</sup> At first glance this would seem to indicate a large step in the direction of genuine labor radicalism. However, there is no evidence that he was very active in the K. of L. at this time, and it must be remembered, too, that this organization was not purely a labor body, since its fairly catholic membership policy permitted a varied assortment of middle-class and agrarian reformers to take part in and even control the affairs of the organization. This was especially the case with New York's District Assembly 49, to which DeLeon's local belonged: there, the "Home Club," a ring of nonproletarian reform politicians, had traditionally held sway. Therefore, it is difficult to view his initial contact with the Knights as any kind of watershed.

Some writers have seen DeLeon's explicit rejection of the single tax early in 1889 as Marxist-inspired, a direct consequence of his having come across Friedrich Engels' 1887 critique of George<sup>26</sup> and thus the turning point in his evolution away from bourgeois reform. Engels' objections to the single-tax program, which appeared in the preface to the American edition of his *The Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844*, derived from the historical materialism that he had propounded for many years. George, according to Engels, was in error for holding that land distribution was the historic basis for "the splitting up of the people into rich and poor." Rather, Marx's collaborator maintained, "the cause of the present antagonism of the classes and of the social degradation of the working class is their expropriation from *all* means of production, in which the land is of course included." Hence, while George would mistakenly leave "the present mode of social production untouched," socialists "demand . . . a total revolution of the whole system of social production."<sup>27</sup>

However, DeLeon's earliest criticism of George's political economy seemed influenced far more by his training as a legal logician and by *Looking Backward* than it did by any reading of Engels. His ideological position was still in flux in the first months of 1889, sufficiently so for the Georgeite *New York Standard* to describe him vaguely as "semi-single tax and semi-socialistic." The "semi-single tax" label may have been prompted in part because DeLeon chose the Manhattan Single Tax Club as a forum for expressing his dissent, a sign that his break from the immediate past was far from complete. At the club's meetings, he spoke against the single-tax theory's logical inconsis-



tency, not a likely tack for a recent convert to Marxism. In the manner, rather, of a courtroom lawyer probing the weaknesses of an adversary's argument, DeLeon attempted to demonstrate deductively that while George's theory opposed state ownership of the means of production, such would be the eventual result of the theory's application. He also took the curious, un-Marxian position that Georgeism was bound to fail politically because it had the effect of uniting all other interests on the side of the landlord, these being economically dependent on the latter. And he further argued, from an ethical standpoint reflecting the impact of Bellamy, that society under the single tax would still have to endure the low standard of morality generated by competition—a factor that would remain unchanged, since George did not view competition per se as baneful and did not, therefore, propose its eradication.<sup>28</sup>

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The ethical theme was further enunciated in a letter DeLeon had published at about this time in a reform journal. Significantly, he refrained from rendering in it an analysis of "the economics of the single-tax gospel." "In order to make my point clear," he declared, "I shall grant . . . for the sake of argument . . . that all the premises and all the economic deductions of the single-tax theory are sound." But, he asked, "What would be the standard of morality in the single-tax social system?" Answering his own query, he claimed that "wealth . . . [would be] produced, as at present, with a single eye to profit and not to the well-being of . . . [one's] fellows." Averring that that state of affairs was "best symbolized by two brawny pugilists holding their clenched fists under each other's nose [*sic*]," DeLeon concluded: "That such a system should cause the eyes of cowboydom to flash with rapture and fire the hearts of buccaneers would be easy to understand; that, however, it should inspire the minds of good and noble men—of men some of whom believe in Christ and all of whom preach him, of men who maintain the fatherhood of God and proclaim the brotherhood of man—that is a spectacle rich with instruction."<sup>29</sup>

DeLeon, then, did not join the Nationalist movement as a Marxist nor in any sense as a labor radical. Certainly he had been exposed to radical thought, and that exposure had confirmed his doubts about nostrums, such as those of Henry George, which promised solutions to the problems of industrial society without calling for fundamental changes in its structure. Bellamyism burst onto the scene at a time when DeLeon was ideologically adrift and susceptible to new involve-

ments. Its thrust was collectivist, but it was at the same time quite respectable—a very satisfactory combination for a man seeking to reconcile genteel political habits with the fruits of socialist study. In addition, its ultimate objective of an ideal society founded on cooperation seemed to meet DeLeon's profound need for a satisfying sense of belonging, while its diffuse, nondoctrinaire character<sup>30</sup> corresponded well to the inchoate, embryonic quality of his own political thought in this period.

This quality, reflected especially in the persistence of genteel patterns in his behavior, remained a prominent feature of DeLeon's politics as a Nationalist. One manifestation of it was his relationship with the parallel political phenomenon of Christian Socialism, a movement composed of Protestant clergymen from the middle and upper-middle classes, whose commitment, like that of most Nationalists, was non-Marxist and inspired primarily by ethical concerns.<sup>31</sup> Close connections often logically developed between local branches of the two movements, and DeLeon, too, apparently believed their outlooks to be compatible, for he joined the Boston Society of Christian Socialists and contributed to its official publication, the *Dawn*.<sup>32</sup> Although moving leftward, he still found himself lecturing before gatherings of "cultured people,"<sup>33</sup> and when addressing audiences "essentially composed of critical workingmen," he openly reveled in the fact that the "best elements of the American people" were flocking to the Nationalist banner.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, DeLeon still criticized the prevailing order in decidedly mugwump tones, holding it responsible for a state of affairs in which "immorality" and "corruption" were "rampant among the people, and break[ing] out in the government."<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, the specific issues that engaged DeLeon's energies were the meat of the middle-class reformer, not the revolutionary. According to the movement press, DeLeon's New York Club Number 1 "fann[ed] two important issues: municipal rapid transit and proper school laws which implie[d] better, in fact, proper factory legislation with regard to children." His work in the transit campaign included serving on a Nationalist debate team that "advocated railroads without the issue of bonds or shares, and proved that private railroads in New York City could carry passengers for 2½ cents, while now 5 cents is charged." And his labors to improve educational conditions saw him participating in several meetings with a view to building support for the Nationalist position.<sup>36</sup>

Also in a reformist vein was the controversy stirred by DeLeon over the taking of the federal census. Voicing the standard mugwump complaint of official malfeasance and corruption, he wrote an article charging that a government conspiracy was afoot to conceal the extent of unemployment from the American people. He claimed that census authorities deliberately avoided compiling unemployment statistics when taking the federal census of 1880, even though legally obligated to do so, and that an unemployment data provision was not incorporated into the 1890 statute so that such concealment could be continued without further violation of the law—this despite numerous citizens' memorials requesting a report on joblessness. A great flap ensued, which, before it had run its course, came to involve Census Director Carroll D. Wright and the editors, respectively, of the *Boston Herald*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Workmen's Advocate*, and the *Nationalist*.<sup>37</sup>

Developing alongside the genteel politics, though, and quickly preempting it as the dominant aspect in DeLeon's Weltanschauung, was a Marxist posture.<sup>38</sup> DeLeon opined in February 1890 that the "labor movement is daily placing itself upon a correcter, sounder, higher plane; its demands are becoming more and more distinct and well-weighed." But he was inadvertently projecting from himself to the labor movement a Marxism whose shape was "becoming more and more distinct" in his own mind. Hence, he could declare, in this same address, that "the workers . . . realize more and more their precarious position. The labor movement, the direct struggle for existence between the workers and the capitalists, then commences in all its distinctness." In this context, the misdeeds of public officials in the matter of unemployment statistics took on a somewhat different light; the census officers were identified as employees of the capitalist class, and the point was made that "the conduct of the government but reflects the wishes of its masters, the capitalists."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, a DeLeon article that seemed to accept "ADEQUATE REFORM" as a viable alternative to "SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION"<sup>40</sup> also offered a clearly revolutionary analysis of the future of capitalism:

The capitalist policy or system of production carries, like the scorpion, the means of its own destruction in its womb. Being but a period of transition, the law of its existence is motion, a motion that gathers velocity as it rushes onward: and since that motion brings with it the gorging and congestion of wealth at one extremity, which ever diminishes in numbers, the other extremity

must of necessity become more and more pinched and squeezed, and must grow apace in numbers and in quality until it takes in the masses of the people.<sup>41</sup>

And in November 1890, during a commemoration of the martyrdom of the Haymarket anarchists, DeLeon further displayed a Marxism erected upon polite foundations. His speech there forms an interesting contrast with the one cited earlier, which was delivered shortly after the sentencing of the alleged bomb-throwers in 1887. As had DeLeon the single-taxer, DeLeon the reformer-cum-revolutionary dwelled at length on the legal aspects of the case, the miscarriage of justice befouling the record of American jurisprudence, and concluded that: "Upon the law and the facts the only criminals were the police; the Chicago martyrs were as innocent as the speaker himself. No truthful man could question this statement of facts; no self-respecting lawyer could dispute the conclusion of law." But this time patriotic pieties were not invoked, DeLeon preferring to explore what he regarded as the deeper meaning of the episode:

If, then, the Chicago martyrs were innocent, why were they executed? . . . They were executed by a murderous plutocracy because they were felt to be the champions of the outraged proletariat, because by their words they threatened to prevent the capitalist conspiracy from cowing the working people and keeping them in tame subjection grinding out profits and voting like cattle for the Democratic and Republican parties—the parties of their exploiters.

It was for that reason that the thankful proletariat now commemorated the death of their champions; and for the further reason that, owing to the manhood, the abnegation, the fortitude of those champions in their great trial, the great labor movement, so far from having been nipped in the bud in accordance with the plan of capitalism, had received a tremendous impetus.<sup>42</sup>

This outcropping of scientific socialism, it should be noted, did not represent a repudiation of the general principles and objectives of Nationalism so much as a more precise reformulation of them in Marxist terms. "Nationalism" and "Socialism" became synonymous in DeLeon's parlance,<sup>43</sup> the former being selectively interpreted so that it was indistinguishable from the latter. However, most Nationalists could not accept the equation. They refused to grasp the nettle of the

class conflict thesis and the identification with labor that it implied.<sup>44</sup> The conflict was fundamental and was the major factor in DeLeon's eventual decision to leave the Nationalist movement for the more hospitable environs of the Socialist Labor Party.

The ideological chasm opening between DeLeon and his Nationalist colleagues was marked by his progressive estrangement from the bourgeois reform style associated with their position and previously reflected in his own. An announcement of the opening of a "Radical Club" in New York in the spring of 1890 provided him with an opportunity to express his changing attitude publicly. He had been listed in the reform and radical press as one of "the well-known members" of the club, which was intended to serve as "a sort of neutral ground where all radicals and liberals can meet on a basis of perfect equality and fair play." In an open letter to club official Moses Oppenheimer, DeLeon withdrew from the new organization, because, contrary to his earlier information, it would feature lectures and debates, more or less as a diversion for the membership. DeLeon regarded the proposed format as a typical instance of middle-class dilettantism, part and parcel of an annoying propensity to talk the good fight, and his recently acquired proletarian identity caused him to bristle at his inclusion in the scheme: "This is no season for assorted talks or phrase mongering . . . the stump and agitation leaf should be our rostrum, the masses our audience. For such places only should we reserve all our spare time, means and efforts . . . the talk feature . . . is not only useless and superfluous, I think it is positively harmful at this season."<sup>45</sup>

An even clearer indication that a parting of the ways was in the offing could be found in another open letter DeLeon wrote less than two weeks later, this time in response to an appeal addressed to him by fellow Nationalist and New York Society of Christian Socialists member A. A. Chevaillier<sup>46</sup> in behalf of DeLeon's former single-tax associate, R. Heber Newton. Newton and Chevaillier were seeking aid from DeLeon, as a leading figure among New York Nationalists, "to prevent the Nationalists from putting up a candidate for Mayor this fall, because there will be a citizens' movement, and we should all join in that." DeLeon firmly rejected their request. No longer would he invest his talents, his hopes, and his energies in loosely organized campaigns animated only by a vague impulse for social and political betterment; no longer would he extend his loyalties to aggregations led by genteel types for whom social change was a debating club amuse-

ment. In a reply containing a further illustration of the mesh of polite and Marxist intellectual patterns that had formed in his mind, DeLeon began by suspiciously asking: "Who are those who pompously call themselves 'Citizens,' and presume to start these so-called 'Citizens' Movements?" Answering the question, he declaimed:

You will find them, every time, to be people with no real interest in the well-being of our city; people, who, while they claim New York as their residence, are, in fact absent most of the time: in the winter, for one reason, in the summer for another, away in Florida, Narragansett Pier, or Europe; people—vestrymen, many of them—who fatten on tenement house property; gamble in food, own interests in liquor industries, hold stock in factories where men barely earn \$ per day, women a good deal less, and where child-labor flourishes; who control our municipal and state railroads through watered stock, and debauch our legislatures in order not to be molested; in short, you will find them to be the very class of people, together with their hangers-on, who bring about the wretchedness of our city, and who thrive thereupon.

Periodically this class drop their old names of *County Democrats*, *Civil Service Reformers*, *Republicans*, or what not, and turn up as 'Citizens' to 'cleanse the city.' But such is the mixture of ignorance and dishonesty among them that they never think of removing any of the causes of the abuses at which they affect to be indignant. Watch them this fall, and you will not hear a word in favor of proper school accommodations; of compulsory education up to, at least, 16 years; of factory and shop legislation against child-labor; of the city's ownership of its railroads, gas-works, telegraph, etc.; of thoroughgoing sanitary regulations for the homes of the poor; of the enforcement of an eight-hour law on city works; or in favor of any of the many things that would make for individual well-being, and thus lessen the sources of civic corruption. Far from it! These so-called 'Citizens' would have their cake and yet eat it. They are bent upon continuing to draw their profits without check from the sweat of the brows of others, as well as by means of their corrupt practices, and yet will they object to the natural consequences. Tammany is bad enough, God knows; but Tammany is only the natural result of 'Citizens.' How could the Nationalists, in decency associate with such a crew?<sup>47</sup>

The growing difference over ideology between DeLeon and other Nationalists also encompassed the question of organizational struc-

ture and function. The Nationalists were for the most part gradualists, and since they did not view change in apocalyptic terms, they saw no reason to sharpen the cutting edge of their movement by mounting an independent political party with a tight structure and a set of fully articulated demands.<sup>48</sup> DeLeon, on the other hand, believed that this essentially passive policy created an organizational vacuum, which permitted reform energies to be spent without producing meaningful results or which allowed them to be siphoned off into dubious campaigns like that of the "Citizens."

By the early months of 1890 he had grown impatient for the personal redemption a new society would bring, and the need for an independent party to fulfill that urgent desire became a frequent refrain in his speeches and writings, as did a fervent optimism that such would materialize. In February of that year, he referred to "independent political action" as "the only path for the solution of the labor problem." In the month following, when analyzing Nationalism in an article for the SLP official organ, DeLeon considered the movement's importance to lie in what he thought, erroneously, were "its rapid, steady strides" toward independent political expression, the founding Boston club having been but "the first club of a new party." He conceded that:

With so short a history behind it the Nationalist movement cannot yet be expected to be more than an educational one, and its clubs throughout the country are as yet but centers of economic discussions mainly, or nurseries for the men and women who at the proper time shall go forth to address larger audiences for political and immediate action. In so far, its work is preparatory only; it is a labor of drilling and propaganda.

Nevertheless, the "preparatory" phase he regarded as near completion:

That this period will be speedily passed and the period of action, of independent political action, is at hand, the growth of the movement makes manifest, and the inclination of its members renders inevitable. To this end, however, a more concrete platform is needed. As soon as a good majority of States can be represented at a national conference, the National Conference of the Union will be called together; and from that moment it will cast off the hull of a propaganda party and become a factor in the political struggles of the land—a factor of irresistible power.<sup>49</sup>

In a May lecture before a Nationalist club audience, DeLeon replied to those in the movement who opposed independent political action on the grounds that the country was not yet ready for the cooperative commonwealth, and who felt that premature electoral activity would only serve to discredit Nationalist ideas by its failure. By recourse to statistical data he maintained that the nation's economy was now technologically capable of supporting the bountiful existence for all envisioned in *Looking Backward* and that people would be receptive to demands for radical solutions to social problems, because the concentration of wealth in America was demonstrably increasing. He insisted as well that political action should be undertaken by Nationalists even if the immediate prospects for success at the polls were not especially good: election campaigns were valuable forums for educating the public "and for exposing the Pharisees who hypocritically speak of protecting the workingman while aiding with all their might in his degradation."<sup>50</sup>

"Exposing the Pharisees" was the task in which DeLeon had been engaged in his letter concerning the nascent "Citizens" movement. There, the criticism had served to preface a restatement of his belief that the creation of a party based on the correct principles was an imperative necessity and that that necessity would in due course be met. He had concluded:

There is no Delphic Oracle ambiguity about the Nationalist platform. It is Ay, Ay; Nay, Nay. There is no purity of government possible in a republic under a social system that pauperizes the masses, and, through the congestion of wealth in the hands of the few, demoralizes even these. The party whose foundation we have helped to lay, the men with whom alone we can affiliate must stand outspokenly upon those bases. What exactly we shall do, I cannot now tell. But this, I hope is certain—at all events I shall strenuously work in that direction—that an independent party of genuine New York citizens be formed essentially upon the Nationalist or Socialist platform; a party not of phrase-monsters, but of honest purposes. We can't waste time on 'Citizens'; we must go to the people.<sup>51</sup>

As the election campaign of 1890 drew closer, DeLeon, it appears, attempted to organize the new party he had been seeking. The *Nationalist* reported that, in the name of New York's "central organization of



Nationalists," a circular, undoubtedly authored by DeLeon, went out "to the labor, trade, and radical organizations of the city." It read:

An important campaign is approaching for the election of municipal, state and federal officers.

Our people have entered upon one of those stages in the social evolution of nations that mark the close of an old and the opening of a new era. The social stage of civilization based upon the wage-system is passing away; a humaner one, now made practicable by the great inventions, is about to take its place; and issues, different from those hitherto applicable, now thrust themselves upon the public mind.

Yet, notwithstanding, both the Democratic and the Republican parties, together with their several factions in this city, continue divided upon matters of empty form, or upon issues looking only to the interests of the capitalist and landlord class. Nor is this to be wondered at.

It is not given to political parties, or classes, that have outlived their day either to readjust themselves to changed conditions or to acknowledge themselves obsolete. Neither the Whig nor the Democratic party of a generation ago would or could have grappled with the issue of chattel slavery. A new party, imbued with the new idea, was needed and sprang up. No more would or could the Democratic or Republican party squarely face the irrepressible conflict that is upon us today. They live on memories of the past; even the so-called 'reform' parties that periodically break loose from their ranks, such as 'citizens,' etc., while preserving the worst features of both, lack the redeeming qualities of either, and exemplify, with their platitudes and dilettanteism [*sic*], the imbecility of the ruling class. Now, as in the days of Fremont and Lincoln, the conditions call for a new, vigorous party; a party conscious of the needs of our age, and resolute to carry out its demands.<sup>52</sup>

Apparently DeLeon's call fell on deaf ears, for no new party emerged. As late as mid-October, habit still impelled him to speak of the Nationalists as a "solid phalanx,"<sup>53</sup> but by then he had already accepted the reality that an independent Nationalist party would not be forthcoming.

When it became obvious that DeLeon's organizational efforts had aborted, he took his relatively small group of Nationalist supporters

into the Socialist Labor Party. This development had been presaged the previous July by DeLeon's leadership in arranging electoral cooperation for the fall between the SLP and the nucleus of what he expected would be a Nationalist party. However, the nucleus remained just that, since the bulk of Bellamyite support in the city went to the Commonwealth Party, the formal name adopted by Chevaillier's "Citizens." The "Citizens" organization was still an anathema to DeLeon, and its unacceptability to him was confirmed by the lack of interest shown by labor groups toward its convention that fall. Anxious to participate in the campaign, though, to advance the cause of Nationalism as he interpreted it, DeLeon began speaking for SLP candidates in September, and within a few weeks his left-wing Nationalist faction followed suit, formally repudiating the Commonwealth Party and forming itself into a branch of the socialist movement.<sup>54</sup>

DeLeon's entrance into the SLP was not the dramatic event it might appear to be at first glance. When he took that final step, it was not a particularly long one. Generally speaking, Bellamyites and Socialists, especially in the New York area, often pooled their efforts on projects of mutual concern. For their part, the Socialists considered the growth of Nationalism to be a positive trend, and their press gave it sympathetic coverage. SLP members even joined Nationalist clubs, a case in point being DeLeon's own New York Club No. 1, whose founders included Party men Lucien Sanial and Charles Sotheran. The affinity between the two movements is suggested as well by the movement of personnel in the opposite direction: many Socialists were made in the clubs, and some, like DeLeon and C. H. Matchett, the SLP's candidate in 1892 for Vice-President, rose to prominence in the Party.<sup>55</sup>

DeLeon had actually been in close physical proximity to the organized socialist movement for some time. The Socialists had been his coalition partners in the United Labor Party, and his work as a Nationalist found him frequently speaking or writing under SLP auspices.<sup>56</sup> The Party, then, was not an unfamiliar milieu when DeLeon joined it, which eased the transition. And since the SLP was a tightly organized, labor-oriented group, structurally independent of reform aggregations and firmly rooted in the class struggle, it bore a close likeness to the Nationalist political body DeLeon had hoped to see.

Significantly, though, he did not embrace the Socialists until it was clear that the party envisaged in *Looking Backward*, one representing

"all ranks of labor,"<sup>57</sup> was not to be realized. This failing, painfully revealed in the adherence of most Nationalists to the Commonwealth Party cause, signified to DeLeon the bankruptcy of the Nationalist movement; it thereby became "the defunct" and "the late lamented," no longer deserving loyalty, only "thanks . . . for the instruction of men and things . . . it had afforded to the *bona-fide* clubs." But while the Nationalists and Bellamy personally were thus relegated to the historical dustbin, *Looking Backward* was not. DeLeon continued to speak of the novel as "a wonderful book" that had performed great service in the "cause of human progress." And despite many years of interpreting and propounding the more systematic and trenchant texts of Marx and Engels, he could, in 1906, still feel that "there was nothing Utopian in 'Looking Backward' " and that as the author of the work, Bellamy had shown himself to be "a man of brilliant intellect."<sup>58</sup>

DeLeon distinguished clearly between the philosophy of *Looking Backward* and those who professed to be following it in their actions. In a speech given at the time that DeLeon's Nationalist minority integrated itself into the Socialist Labor Party, he condemned the main body of Nationalists' piecemeal reform policy, invoking the authority of *Looking Backward* to buttress his argument. According to a press report of the meeting, DeLeon endeavored

to prove on the one hand the necessity of a full political programme, and on the other, the folly of expecting to arouse popular enthusiasm with one-idea fractional agitation, and he clinched this point by contrasting the phenomenal success of 'Looking Backward,' which gave a full picture of the future Commonwealth and of what should be our present demands, with all the one-idea books, such as those on the money question only, the monopoly only, the land only, etc.

Bellamy himself was denounced in 1894 when his journal, the *New Nation*, was forced to cease publication. DeLeon bitterly commented that the novelist's "disloyalty to the cause that inspired the pages of his great book, shriveled the pages of his private paper."<sup>59</sup>

DeLeon's point in all this was that fidelity to the tenets of *Looking Backward* now required affirming allegiance to the Socialist Labor Party. Nationalists who restricted themselves to the work of their clubs in limited, isolated reform ventures and who allowed themselves to be submerged in amorphous coalitions like the Commonwealth

Party were deemed counterfeit issue, traitors to the cooperative commonwealth idea. For a time after his avowal of support for the SLP, DeLeon still turned up at Nationalist club meetings, primarily to preach his message to the unregenerate. Such was his purpose in discussing the import of the Commonwealth Party phenomenon before a Nationalist audience during the election campaign. According to a report of his remarks:

The speaker introduced his address with the remark that if the Commonwealth Party had possessed the vigor and influence of a Roman Empire one might be sure that some 500 years later some Gibbon would rise, give its history and point to its moral. In this case, however, if all that were not done now and quickly, there was danger of the lesson being wholly lost and therefore those who saw the meteor should take its picture before it was wholly buried in oblivion, and draw from it the important lesson that it teaches.

The same mission brought DeLeon to a lecture by Edward King, an advocate of compromise and a critic of socialism. After the speaker had concluded his remarks, DeLeon rose to challenge him, assailing compromise as ineffectual and defending the correctness of the socialist position. Moreover, he accepted an invitation to examine for Nationalists the rather confused platform of reformer Hugh Pentecost. Before subjecting the clergyman's proposals to a merciless scrutiny, DeLeon told his listeners that Pentecost's views, as such, were not really worth serious attention, but that they did have didactic utility "as a black background on which to contrast the ways of light."<sup>60</sup>

Thus, DeLeon attempted to draw other Nationalists along the path he had taken, one faithful to the Bellamyite maxim that: "No truth can avail unless practically applied." That path led inexorably to the conclusion, echoed in a later Socialist appeal, that "Nationalists cannot vote for their principles outside of the Socialist [Labor] Party."<sup>61</sup> Characteristically, the paradox that a true Nationalist vision dictated abandonment of the Nationalist movement was the foundation upon which DeLeon began his career in the Party.

## 4 *The Turn to Marxism*

Halting and incremental though it may have been, DeLeon's turn to Marxian socialism seems surprising and, on the surface, puzzling. There was nothing apparent in his background to suggest that he would, at the fairly mature age of thirty-eight, dedicate himself completely to waging class war on the side of the proletariat. Nevertheless, Marxism became the ideological frame in which DeLeon would henceforth attempt to resolve his problem of self-definition, and the key factor in this choice, it will be argued, was Eugène Sue's novel *Le juif errant*, a work with which DeLeon was certainly familiar<sup>1</sup> and whose influence can be detected in his writings.

That he held Sue's work in especially high regard is obvious from his extensive translations of the Frenchman, his most ambitious effort being Sue's nineteen-novel series, *The Mysteries of the People, or a Proletarian Family across the Ages*, which was run serially in the Party organ and subsequently published in book form.<sup>2</sup> That he was strongly influenced by the novelist begins to become apparent when it is remembered that *Le juif errant's* principal villains are the Jesuits, who are depicted as unscrupulous conspirators closely identified with the rich and powerful enemies of the working class and its benefactor, Ahasuerus.<sup>3</sup> Although clerics of many denominations in DeLeon's day took to the pulpit and the printed page to polemicize against socialism, he devoted particular attention to returning the fire of Roman Catholic spokesmen, Jesuits prominent among them.

This special fervor for denouncing Catholic antagonists can be noted in comments DeLeon made at the time of the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901, a crime falsely laid at the door of

the Socialist Labor Party by clerical critics from all three of the major faiths. To be sure, he scored "the vulgar language hurled from the Protestant and Jewish pulpits, lumping Socialism and Anarchism in one." But deserving separate, more extensive, and more colorful mention for the same scurrility was "the immoral attitude struck by the Princes of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of this country, who, forgetful of their claim that they are 'teachers of morality,' have, on the occasion of the Buffalo tragedy, resorted to the immoral act of falsifying the tenets and principles of Socialism." Such seemingly gratuitous animosity occurred frequently in DeLeon's writings: when jousting with Populist Tom Watson in 1909, for instance, he went out of his way to state that "the Prince of the Church Cardinal Antonelli was a promiscuous begetter of children"; and while brooding aloud about his ideologically erring son in 1913, he recalled that "William the Taciturn, who struck the blow that set the Netherlands free from the yoke of Spain, begot a son that turned upon his father, [as] a bigoted, blood-thirsty Jesuit."<sup>4</sup>

In both the vehemence and the frequent recurrence of DeLeon's attacks on the Catholic Church, there is considerably more than the usual dose of socialist anticlericalism. A single article on socialism in the Catholic press or one report of a speech on the subject by a Jesuit commentator could provoke a lengthy, sharply worded series of editorials in which the offending document was subjected to the most minute, rigorous scrutiny. Thus, when the Providence, Rhode Island, *Visitor*, a Catholic journal, ventured to ask fifteen hostile questions about socialism in 1913, DeLeon promptly published detailed replies in the *Daily People*;<sup>5</sup> and a lecture given in 1911 by a Jesuit priest, Father Thomas I. Gasson, similarly inspired an exegesis that carried through nineteen editorials before DeLeon was satisfied that the issues raised had been satisfactorily treated.<sup>6</sup>

In his unrelenting campaign against the Catholic Church, several themes were stressed. One dealt with the relationship of organized Roman Catholicism to human progress and freedom. DeLeon regarded the church as "an institution that became, as it could not choose but become, the scourge of man while it held power; and that to-day, crippled though it is by advanced enlightenment, continues a hindrance, if not a menace to Progress." To him, its dominant "civil and political theory" was "destructive of liberty," "corrupt," and "vicious," and he concluded that, by its very nature, it was "incurrigi-

ble." These unsavory features were seen by DeLeon in the fundamentally authoritarian posture displayed by the church toward those, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, who disagreed with its social and political positions. He felt that it had "no Christian feeling for Christians who refused to submit to its temporal yoke," and that if it "had its way, whoever [even] remotely criticized it would be burnt at the stake." The face the church presented to its own followers was one of "a closed and self-perpetuating corporation, superimposed from above and unremovable from below," while the intolerant behavior it encouraged toward dissenting noncommunicants gave "just grounds to see the rack and the stake—which it used against its adversaries whenever it had power—casting before them their fatidic shadow."

Another antichurch theme developed by DeLeon associated organized Roman Catholicism, politically and economically, with capitalism. In one of his editorials he drew attention to the fact that Marcus Hanna and Chauncey Depew believed the church to be "'the best police' " and " 'the most effective guarantee against Socialism' "; he also observed that a member of the hierarchy praisefully quoted the Republican senators to this effect during a subsequent speech at Catholic University. And when Jesuit Father Bernard Vaughan rendered his first Lenten deliverance in 1912, DeLeon likened his performance to that of "the capitalist political stump speaker with whom recklessness of allegations is a characteristic, and the chucking of big bluffs, and none too big, the most cherished method." That priests would take up the cudgels in behalf of the propertied interests seemed logical to DeLeon, since he considered the priesthood itself to be among the "satraps" composing the "ruling property class," indeed even "a star member" of that class. When a Catholic pastor in Rome, New York, complained to local authorities in 1913 about a woman soliciting subscriptions for an antichurch publication and had her removed from the city, the church, as far as DeLeon was concerned, thereby confirmed his view of it as a property-oriented institution. For the legal basis of the complaint was libel, and consequently he reasoned that: "By claiming that it is libeled, the agencies of . . . [the church] read . . . [the church] within the [libel] statute; by reading . . . [the church] within the statute, they proclaim the status of . . . [the church] to be that of a 'corporation or association of persons' that pursues a 'business or occupation,' which occupation or business can be damaged in dollars and cents."<sup>8</sup>

The notion most frequently reiterated about the Catholic Church, however, was that it was not really a devotional body at all but a political movement "ambushed behind religion." DeLeon saw the clerical garb as but a means to gain undue advantage in the political arena. He claimed that:

The political Roman Catholic Church . . . demands all the rights of a political body toward others, but denies all others the same rights toward itself. The latter it attempts under the plea of 'religion.' When its Washington, D.C., organ publishes statistical tables of the Congressional districts in which the 'Catholic vote' holds the balance of power, and the figures are used to bring pressure upon the government for appropriations and political appointments—that it pronounces a 'legitimate exercise of political rights'; when such a maneuver is counter-manuevered by other seekers after appropriations and appointments—that it condemns as 'bigotry.'

The spiritual aspect of the institution, he believed, was just an anachronistic superstructure, not its essence. He asserted:

The fact that the one-time distinctive feature of the members of the Roman Catholic political organization, to wit, their devotional convictions, no longer is the feature of the membership of the modern body, is a fact pregnant with meaning . . . To-day the membership of Roman Catholic political bodies is composed, not merely of devout Roman Catholics and of men who are Roman Catholic by profession only, but also of Jews, of Protestants of all the '57 varieties,' and of atheists of Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant extraction. Tammany Hall in this city is a type of the modern Roman Catholic political body.<sup>9</sup>

The only unifying quality DeLeon found in contemporary Catholicism, which he dubbed "Ultramontanism" to shear it of its sham piety, was its reactionary political stance. DeLeon identified three basic forces as operative in American politics: "the conservative element," comprising the two major parties; "the progressive-revolutionary element," represented by the Socialists; and "the reactionary-revolutionary element," whose organizational expression was the Roman church.<sup>10</sup> Hence, as in Sue's depiction of the Jesuits, the church was not perceived as a religious entity professing a particular theology, but rather as an undifferentiated symbol of temporal evil.



This image can be further discerned in DeLeon's analysis of the role the church would play when the moment of his expected revolution had arrived. He took note of the fact

that in th[e] crusade against Socialism the Roman Catholic Church leads. It is most active. Whether it be at the funeral of a New York archbishop or the laying of the cornerstone of a new Buffalo cathedral, or the graduation exercises of a Catholic school, or whatever the public occasion, tirades of various lengths and various degrees of bitterness against Socialism are never missing from the numbers of the program. And, what is more, the Roman Catholic hierarchy is ostentatiously proud of its anti-Socialist activities.<sup>11</sup>

He also observed with interest the growing number of Catholic " 'conversions' of millionaires" and the news that a wealthy Baltimore Jew had donated twenty-five thousand dollars to the Church's anti-socialist program. Such phenomena DeLeon attributed to a heightening of class tensions and the consequent attraction the church held, due to its authoritarianism and antisocialism, for men of property. Thus, he predicted that the Catholic Church would serve as the "last resort against Socialism" for "the usurping class." He anticipated that the church would emerge, ironically, as the antichrist in the coming apocalyptic struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness: "The great political conflict that is coming to a head is wiping out all intermediary political expressions and is bound to leave extant just two . . . types of . . . opposing forces—the Socialist political body as the type . . . that make[s] for progress, hence, freedom; and the Roman Catholic equally political body as the type . . . that make[s] for retrogression, hence, slavery."<sup>12</sup>

Whatever influence they may have had on workingmen in general, DeLeon's repeated attacks on the Roman church certainly had their effect on the members of his party. Ella Reeve Bloor, for example, recalled in her autobiography that: "When, in 1902, I joined the [rival] Socialist Party, many of my old S.L.P. friends . . . showered me with rosaries, charms, crucifixes, prayer books, as though I had joined the Catholic Church."<sup>13</sup>

DeLeon's stand against the Catholic Church was so strong that it made the SLP an anticlerical rallying point, and some recruits, notably the young Louis Fraina, were initially attracted to the Party for that

reason. If the anti-"Ultramontane" line could draw new supporters, however, it was also potent enough to engender intra-Party controversy, the most celebrated example of which involved the Irish socialist and later Easter Rebellion martyr, James Connolly. Solicitous of the religious sensibilities of Catholic workers, Connolly, writing in the *Weekly People* in 1904, called for the Party to mute its antichurch propaganda. DeLeon retorted that the Party would not "allow any one clergyman or organization of clergymen . . . to rule it one inch off its legitimate, terrestrial field of action."<sup>14</sup> And so it was to be.

Taken together, then, DeLeon's familiarity with Eugène Sue's *Le juif errant*, the extraordinary extent to which he translated that prolific author's other works, and the deep-seated, seemingly inexplicable enmity he expressed toward the Church of Rome and its Jesuit order—all testify to the fact that Sue's use of the Wandering Jew had a major impact on DeLeon. Further confirmation, and an understanding of why it had an impact, follow from a closer examination of the details of the French author's treatment of the Jew, which corresponds to the "St. John" variant discussed earlier. As stated by a recent historian of the legend:

[Sue's] Wandering Jew tends to identify himself with the down-trodden multitude of laboring men and women . . . he sees . . . hope for a brighter future for the workers. When that happy day shall have come, . . . he will be ready to die. In fact, . . . [he] believe[s] that things have progressed so far, by the time of the final scene, that [he] . . . can begin preparations for [his] . . . end. He has worked to help the wage slave . . . [and] *has so identified himself with the workingman*, in fact, *that Christ's curse has struck not only him but the workers also, through him. This is how it has been for centuries, but now a new day is coming, and with it the release of Ahasuerus.*<sup>15</sup>

Such would have suggested to DeLeon a compelling mode for surmounting the personal crisis he faced as a member of an international people emotionally adrift in an era of nationalism. It would have given specific guidance for the attainment of that inchoate "amalgamation" for which he had expressed a desire in 1879. Like Ahasuerus, he could cast his lot with the proletariat, a nationless body of historic fellow-wanderers in whom hope could be seen for the future redemption of all. If, in the present, this just meant becoming part of another, more amorphous community of oppression, the working class was

nevertheless a community of immense proportions with potential for acquiring coherence through revolutionary struggle. A painful Jewish identity would be submerged and lost in the more comprehensive and sustaining identity concept of the proletarian, its final interment awaiting only the "new day" to follow.

Whether Sue's Ahasuerus had a conscious influence on DeLeon is impossible to determine, but DeLeon's own words suggest that its effect may have been partly subliminal. Reflecting, some twelve years later, on his initial movement toward a labor-oriented politics, he remarked that: "In 1886, . . . instinct was, unconsciously to myself, leading me to look into the social problem, . . . to me a confused and blurred interrogation mark." And implicit in an epistemological comment, offered in the course of a 1911 analysis of Comtean evolutionary theory and its bearing on the Catholic "Modernist" movement, is an additional indication that the impact of *Le juif errant* was perhaps unconscious:

Correctly did Auguste Comte point out that . . . in lower stages of life . . . evolution takes place regardless and without the knowledge and assistance of the living body . . . However high the stage of life, still there clings to it some of the features of the lower. It pushes, true enough; but is itself pushed by forces it knows not of, by forces it is so little aware of that . . . it is not infrequently driven to amazing contradictions.<sup>16</sup>

Regardless, though, of how the tale's special meaning was actually imbued in DeLeon, the crucial fact that it was imbued emerges from a close reading of his statements on a variety of subjects at different times and in different contexts. First, it would appear that Sue's literary creation, by affording DeLeon a self-image to which he could relate and at the same time pointing the way out of his political maze, fortified in him the faith that he could successfully alter his personal situation: he need not continue to suffer alienation and the disappointment of abortive efforts to escape its travails. This, too, he subsequently expressed in an abstract, evolutionary formulation: man, in an "advanced" stage of development, advancement being defined as the possession of a true knowledge of one's condition and the means to overcome it, can "take evolution by the hand, so to speak, and perform an active part in the process." Moreover, through a similar extrapolation of the new awareness he had gained from Sue, he came to the belief, constant throughout his socialist career, that that stage had

been reached: "Everywhere, the sensitive elements of society are on the move—blindly, for a spell, during which one part of their being clashes, at war with the other part; presently open-eyed, when they become ONE with themselves."<sup>17</sup>

As has been stated, DeLeon became "one with himself" by totally identifying with the proletariat, his "friends in affliction," as he once addressed them. As far as he was concerned, "Capitalist Society rolls the steam-roller of the Capitalist Class ruthlessly over the Classes below, crushing them into one amorphous pulp, and annihilating the differences of individuality that flow from different capabilities." To evoke the desired sense of immersion in such a great, impersonal, undifferentiated entity, one having the extent and potential power of a force of nature, DeLeon frequently resorted to the metaphor of water—rivers, oceans, tidal waves—when describing the proletariat. A comparison of the size of the classes in proletarian "institutions of higher learning," the SLP and the trade unions, with that of the classes at the "old-style" bourgeois academies, was, for example, likened by DeLeon to a comparison between "the sands of the ocean" and "the gravel of a puddle." When discoursing during a debate on "the law of revolutions," he asserted that the several social components of revolutions eventually come together in "one mighty, irresistible stream." In his report to the 1893 Zurich International, he wrote of "the tidal wave of the Revolutionary Labor Movement," which, later, as an IWW spokesman, he predicted would "soon . . . burst over . . . [the] heads" of the AFL leaders. And elsewhere he prophesied that: "The swelling tide of the oppressed and long-suffering class will swamp all dams and obstacles. That tide is certainly rising. Its swell extends far and wide."<sup>18</sup>

The image of self-immersion decidedly affected DeLeon's rhetorical style. As a lecturer and debater, he avoided cultivating "celebrity" status for himself, registering impatience at the applause and adulation that often attended his impressive platform performances. Debating Job Harriman on the question of dual unionism in 1900, DeLeon responded to applause by snapping at the audience: "Don't take away my time." Similarly, while giving a speech on the IWW on a hot July day in 1905, DeLeon answered applause with the admonition: "I must earnestly request you to desist from applauding . . . The frequent interruptions by applause only deter the hour or our joint deliverance." Indeed, this attitude became so prominent a trademark of De-

Leon's appearances at the lectern, that at the time of his death the normally hostile Socialist Party newspaper, the *New York Call*, eulogized him for it: "In a movement which recognizes the mockery of hero worship his name is great . . . There are few orators in America who can sway an audience as Daniel DeLeon could. There are fewer who would refuse the temptations to do so as Daniel DeLeon often did . . . He learned to despise applause."<sup>19</sup>

His unwillingness to stand out as a "star" among the working class caused him to deliberately moderate the naturally scholarly tone of his written and oral expression with informal and slang usages, drawing at times upon his Kansas-born second wife's more intimate familiarity with the American vernacular.<sup>20</sup> To be an integral part of the proletariat, he must have deduced, one had to converse in the language of the proletarian.<sup>21</sup> Hence, in an assault on Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, he could announce that he had "read the book 'kiver to kiver' "; a lecture audience was informed in 1904 that the rival Socialist Party "never will 'get there' " vote-wise, "a miss" being "as good as a mile on the 'get there' run"; readers of his commentary on the 1904 Amsterdam International were told of a resolution that "allowed each nation to 'go its own cake-walk,' as we would say in America";<sup>22</sup> a 1913 editorial chastized socialists devoid of an industrial unionist perspective on revolution for "'talk[ing] big' " and with mock-heroic "'blood and thunder,' " their errors resulting in "'clapperclaw' " and "'chewing the rag' "; and a conflict between silver and armament interests during the Spanish-American War prompted DeLeon to remark that both were "'on the make' in the war."<sup>23</sup>

This acquired taste for the colloquial led DeLeon to appreciate the homespun humor of Artemus Ward's stories, which he often utilized to illustrate points in his speeches and editorials,<sup>24</sup> and which he was fond of reading aloud to his friends and family.<sup>25</sup> In fact he became so interested in the possibilities of communicating in the "vulgar" tongue that he even tried his hand at writing completely in the idiom of the workingman in his "Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan" dialogues, which were a regular feature in the various editions of the Party newspaper and sometimes republished as agitation leaflets.<sup>26</sup>

The feeling of becoming one with the proletariat was no doubt enhanced by the material impoverishment that resulted from choosing that status. DeLeon drew a paltry salary as Party editor, as little as five dollars a week and never more than thirty. Not only was the sal-

ary small, but it frequently went unpaid, owing to a bare Party treasury; at the time of his death the SLP owed DeLeon in excess of three thousand dollars in back pay. Moreover, DeLeon refused to accept any remuneration for his writings, translations, and lectures and declined offers to write on socialism for commercial publications, because he could not abide personally profiting from his political work.<sup>27</sup> The effect of such deprivation on his wife and five children may well be imagined. The family home was a railroad flat, a cold-water, third-floor walk-up apartment in a squalid working-class tenement district, a type of dwelling that was later outlawed by city housing codes. His eldest son, Solon, reported that Bertha DeLeon loyally helped her husband to "scrimp and save and 'go without,' " and he further recalled that his father sometimes "had to borrow back from me some of my pay from my work on *The People* with him." In the minds of some of his other children, deprivation planted a seed of resentment that matured after his death and seriously embittered their memory of him. Nor did DeLeon's poverty affect him and his family alone; it also impeded his Party activity, often forcing him to turn down requests for out-of-town visits and speaking engagements when the financial distress of would-be hosts matched his own, or when the pressures of having to earn extra money outside the Party left him without sufficient time or energy.<sup>28</sup>

Historians have been inclined to view DeLeon's abject circumstances simply as the high price he had to pay in order to follow his convictions. He did not, they argue, find any intrinsic value in being poor. Olive Johnson, for one, asserted that "he was far from being one of the class of 'intellectuals' who go about and make a virtue and a fashion of poverty. He abhorred [*sic*] poverty and misery." And more recently David Herreshoff concurred that "DeLeon accepted poverty because his party was poor, not because he craved an ascetic life." However, although it would be too much to contend that DeLeon actually reveled in his poverty, there is reason to believe that he did embrace it as a symbol of his new identity, material want apparently having been much preferable to the spiritual want of isolation. As his contemporary Joseph Schlossberg noted, DeLeon "came to this [labor] movement not because of, but despite his economic interests."<sup>29</sup> The reason, perhaps, was that those "economic interests" were bound up with an identity that he was in the process of jettisoning. DeLeon considered wealth to be "the distinctive mark of the bourgeoisie," and

poverty, "the badge of the proletariat."<sup>30</sup> So proud was he of his "badge" that he took great pleasure in flaunting it at those who carried the other. Such is evident in the anecdotes told about DeLeon by his friend and Party comrade, Olive Johnson, anecdotes obviously originating with DeLeon himself. One recalls the time that he was returning from a meeting of the International in Stuttgart aboard a steamer, and an inquiry about what time it was prompted a discussion among the generally well-to-do passengers about the quality and cost of their respective timepieces, each of course boasting of the outstanding merits of his own. DeLeon entered the contest, stating with impressive solemnity that his was the most wonderful watch of all. After the curious group had carefully examined the watch, one person finally voiced the confusion of the others and asked what was so wonderful about it. DeLeon replied: " 'Well, the most wonderful thing about this watch is that it cost 98 cents!' " His pride in the privations his life-style imposed upon him was also evinced when wealthy friends complained to him of their difficulties with burglars. He responded by bragging that he had in his home " 'a patent burglar alarm which causes a thief to fall dead from heart failure the instant he enters my house.' " To the inevitable question of what could possibly cause that, DeLeon answered: " 'Empty walls, home-made furniture, and tin spoons.' "<sup>31</sup>

Having immersed himself in the great mass of the poor and the downtrodden, it is not surprising that DeLeon would be averse to opposite manifestations in others, since such manifestations acted to dilute the emotional balm of personal liberation that the mass experience held for him. He sensed that it was not possible to acquire a collective identity amidst the heterogeneity spawned by individualism. Hence, he combatted individualism wherever it was encountered. "The swagger of individualism," he argued, was "a fetter to human brotherhood and individuality alike,"<sup>32</sup> for "man is a social being, and the real capabilities of his individuality cannot develop so long as he is not in society, merging part of his individuality into the whole."<sup>33</sup> He did not hesitate to propose carrying this message to the historically individualistic middle class, where he expected to find many who would emulate his example.<sup>34</sup> While recognizing that socialism was at its base a working-class movement, he felt that it was also "of interest to the members of the other classes, as human beings," and that "enlightened members of these classes" could and should provide valuable assistance.<sup>35</sup> With this potential support in mind, he considered it

quite "legitimate" to "attempt to induce hard-pushed middle class elements to tear themselves from their class prejudices,"<sup>36</sup> and he made theoretical allowance for their inclusion both in the political reflex he envisioned for the IWW<sup>37</sup> and in the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>38</sup>

DeLeon's antipathy for individualism was especially pronounced when it reared its head among supposed radicals and reformers, people who, ideally, should have been free of the "keen scent for self" characteristic of the capitalist foe. Thus, of a reform platform offered in 1890 by Hugh Pentecost, he complained: "The 'I,' the Ego, is a conspicuous figure in the whole performance. The question in the said platform was not, what did society of which 'I' is but an infinitesimal fraction need or want, but what 'I' wished." An outlook of this sort, in his view, had dire implications for the socialist cause, which, after all, was "not the petty satisfaction of private ambitions, or the still pettier gratification of private grudges, but the lofty, enlightened endeavor after Human Redemption." The fact that private aspiration appeared to him a serious threat to the movement prompted DeLeon to inform his followers that wrong-headed "labor 'celebrities' " were "more dangerous" than capitalist adversaries, and to warn: "Look out for the man with a private grudge in the Labor or Socialist Movement. He will ever be ready to sacrifice the interests of the workers to the gratification of his private malice."<sup>39</sup>

Another individualist challenge came from anarchism, a doctrine frankly celebrating the individual act. DeLeon denounced it as "that theory of society under which man is a law unto himself. It is a theory of society that denies the collectivity. It is a theory of society that finds vastly more affinity with the capitalist class than it does with the Socialist." The true flowering of anarchism was, in his view, "on the receding line of the perspective where the 'I' is biggest and democracy nillest," where "man found the bully or autocrat on top and a herd of slaves 'voluntarily' cooperating in his sustenance below." Because of such sentiments, DeLeon rankled at the numerous attempts of anti-socialist critics to discredit socialism by lumping it together with anarchism and the tactics of sabotage and assassination associated with it. And when spokesmen of the hated Catholic Church hierarchy indulged in this kind of propaganda, he replied in kind by attributing responsibility for anarchist criminality to the church, thereby connecting two of his principal demons. During a lecture delivered in the aftermath of the murder of President McKinley, DeLeon recited a long



list of assassins and would-be assassins, from Balthasar Gerard, the killer of William the Silent, to McKinley's assailant, Leon Czolgosz, and remarked:

It is no accident that these were all brought up by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy during the tender years which that same Hierarchy recognizes as the most important in shaping the future man's mind . . . unable, as it would seem, to free itself from its patriarchal . . . habits, and becoming in our days the handmaid of the capitalist system of despotism . . . it instills into its pupils . . . the . . . false and degrading theory that social conditions are a reflex of government: a theory that by exaggerating the value of the individual act, by thus inflating the individual self-love, needs but to fall upon favorable soil to inevitably breed the assassin.

However, avowed anarchists and the alleged mentors of anarchists in the church were not alone guilty of the sins inherent in the doctrine's individualism. The spectre of anarchism was also seen to haunt the camp of DeLeon's syndicalist adversaries in the IWW. They were scored for "their glorification of individual theft as expropriation by installments" and generally for "seeking to identify . . . individual crimes with the legitimate measures of mass warfare," while the utterances of their leader, William D. Haywood, were compared to those of Bakunin. Of Haywood's views, DeLeon wrote contemptuously: "Unresponsive to the sharp distinction between individual and collective, private and public, single and mass action, Haywoodism advocates by preachment and example acts of petty and private mischief, such as 'sabotage,' theft, and even worse."<sup>40</sup> In this and in all other forms, then, the conception of the individual as distinct from the proletarian mass was to be rejected, for it threatened to destroy the solidarity of that great human entity, without which the process of liberation inspired by the imagination of Eugène Sue would not be possible.

Exciting though Sue's evocation of Ahasuerus may have been to DeLeon, it was nevertheless rendered in the naturally impressionistic idiom of the novelist, not that of the social theorist. *Le juif errant* was literature, and its spirit still had to be transposed into the realm of the political, where it could actually influence events. Briefly, the utopia of Edward Bellamy and the movement it engendered provided a political framework, but *Looking Backward*, too, was literature, and as literature, its practical ineffectiveness as a vehicle of social change be-

came readily apparent in Nationalism's theoretical confusion and organizational incoherence. Furthermore, DeLeon lived in an era awed and enthralled by science and the achievements credited to its coldly precise, rational methods. Nearly every human endeavor sought to wrap itself in the mantle of science and thereby assert its worth. DeLeon, an erudite student of political "science" with a naturally rigorous cast of mind, was fully consonant with the zeitgeist of his age and thus anxious to discover a comprehensive intellectual system through which the literary images gleaned from Sue could be focused, codified, and transformed into political reality. Filling the void, there rose, "majestic," as DeLeon later wrote in another context of him, "the giant intellectual figure of Karl Marx," sounding, "clear as a bell, the scientific note of Marxism." Marxism, of course, as a "social science," was "not, like the exact sciences, subject to demonstration in advance." But in response to the question—"Is, then, man left wholly without guidance, condemned to flounder about in the wilderness, and by accident only to strike the path that leads out of the woods?"—DeLeon, fortified by Marxist theory, declared confidently: "Not at all—at least not our generation." On the contrary, he saw "ever more hearts warming and minds rescued from the Slough of Despond by the lofty sentiments its truths inspire" and perceived with pleasure capitalism's intellectual apologists "writhing with the cold steel of Marxian science in the vitals of their theories."<sup>41</sup>

While the trenchant, systematic quality of Marxism satisfied DeLeon's need for scientific formulation, its cosmic sweep allowed him to submerge himself in an abstract, generalized conception of the world. Division and strife of an ethnic or national character dissolved into the broad panorama of class conflict. Classes were defined not by the simple accident of birth, but by their relationships to the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Universalism parried the thrust of a nationalism that had pronounced harshly upon nationless ethnic minorities. In a world constructed fundamentally of classes rather than nations, a stigmatized minority status could be replaced by inclusion in an ascendant proletarian majority of global scope. Oppression no longer made its victim a pariah; its mark of shame became a badge of dignity, a confirmation of membership in the mass of humanity, not some isolated segment of it. The source of oppression was not personal or cultural, but systemic—the logical outgrowth of an historic concatenation of impersonal forces whose agent, the capitalist class,

took to itself the role of the embattled international minority that had for so long been the burden of the Jews.

DeLeon indicated quite clearly that he found the wider angle of vision afforded by Marxism to be one of its more attractive features. Early in his career he observed that: "In ascertaining the genesis of our . . . feelings it would seem that, by enlarging the field of the wrong, we render the solution more difficult. The reverse is true. By [better] understanding the reason [thereby] of our . . . action and feelings the path we should adopt . . . is pointed with all the greatest distinctness." "Enlarging the field" led him to conclude "that the world today . . . is one broad slave-band, ruled over by one despot," its only common denominator being "abuse," and "that the working class of all nations has but one enemy—the capitalist class of all nations," "a felon class" consisting of but "a small minority."<sup>42</sup>

It led, too, to an appreciation of the fact that Marx's historical materialism gave his system a temporal dimension that enhanced its ability to absorb and disperse painful self-perception. Therefore, DeLeon incorporated himself into the collective movement of history. His convictions reflected, he believed, the "law of human progress." "Democratic in politics, collective in economics," the law "abhorred unipersonal arrangements, . . . and it evolved into social structures where democracy prevails, where the view of all found expression, and where the social instinct approaches nearer and nearer to a realization of the maxim that the endeavors of man must have a social bearing, and that everything not done for the public—the entire public—is only transitory, and because selfish, reactionary."<sup>43</sup> As a result, "The masses of the people have themselves stepped upon the stage of history, as stars, not 'supes' in the performance . . . The center of gravity now rests with the people . . . mastership resides with the mass."<sup>44</sup> The question of class relations, the "Social Question," was the intellectual concomitant of this development, and in DeLeon's mind it was also an historical culmination. It was "the great solvent, that great ocean into which all the rivers of knowledge flow, and to which all the departments of intellectual upbuilding are tributaries."<sup>45</sup> And the solution to the "Social Question," socialism, was likewise a prime actor in a pageant: "Like the sea that takes up in its bosom and dissolves the innumerable elements poured into it from innumerable rivers, to Socialism is the task reserved of solving one and all the problems that have come floating down the streams of time."<sup>46</sup>

DeLeon's submergence of his identity in the historical process explains why he undertook the prodigious labor of translating and publishing Sue's massive serial, *The Mysteries of the People*. The epic work was a fitting literary counterpart to Marx's scientific treatment, telling, in fictional form, the story of the class struggle, from the period of the Roman conquest of Gaul to the French Revolution of 1848. To DeLeon, it was a "monumental serial," a "grand drama," precisely because, according to his son, "it gave a long-range historical view of previous social systems and of popular struggles under them." Although published piecemeal, first in brief segments in the Party press and later in separate volumes containing specific episodes, *The Mysteries of the People* was regarded by DeLeon as an integral whole, its division being the consequence only of scarce funds, the relatively small capacity of the Party's printing plant, and the limitations of his own hectic schedule. While the translation certainly reflected DeLeon's identification with the history described in Sue's opus, it was intended primarily to inspire his working-class readers with the moving spectacle of their common past and thus make them socialists. As he once stated during a lecture, his purposes generally were "to teach the workers, to enlighten them on the great issue before them, and the great historic drama in which most of them are still unconscious actors."<sup>47</sup> Since his own path to Marx had proceeded through the stirring leaves of a Sue novel, he may well have assumed that a similar result among workers would attend the wide dissemination of *The Mysteries of the People*. *Le juif errant* would not have been suitable to the task. Though it had spoken eloquently to the special predicament DeLeon himself faced as a Jew of nonproletarian origins suffering a spiritual malaise, he sensed that its essence was not pertinent to the condition of those he now wished to reach.<sup>48</sup> *The Mysteries of the People*, however, centering as it did on the rich drama of the proletarian past, was a tale that could be expected to fire the imagination and engage the loyalties of the working class.

In addition to offering DeLeon a concrete historical context for his allegorical reading of Sue's *Wandering Jew*, one which impelled him to translate that author's more extensive saga of class struggle, Marxism gave structural form to the nebulous notion of proletarian community contained in the former Sue work. It more sharply delineated the character of that community, describing its projected development through three distinct stages. The first stage was the proletariat seen simply as

a residual category of the downtrodden, the victimized dross of capitalism—a growing majority of men having in common only their lack of property and their related need to sell their labor in order to survive. This was the human raw material out of which a new order of society would be fashioned. Marx's influence upon DeLeon in this respect was already evident by the summer of 1889, and years later, DeLeon's perception of the working class continued to reflect that influence. The working class remained "the wholly toolless class, [comprised of those] who, no longer able to exercise their labor function without access to the tools not owned by themselves, are reduced to the level of merchandise, and compelled to sell their labor power in the labor market for a living."<sup>49</sup>

The second sense in which DeLeon, through Marxism, understood the proletariat to be a community was when it came to be aware of itself as such—when it manifested class-consciousness. The community at this point evinced consciousness by uniting for its own salvation. DeLeon depicted the change from the first to the second stage thus:

The fact of all and each of these [elements of the working class] being engaged, in fact, in the same struggle does not at first dawn upon all and establish the needed solidarity between them. But a conflict by diverse forces against one common enemy cannot be long waged without drawing those forces insensibly together, removing by degrees the mutual suspicions, that at first arise among them, and finally welding them into one solid mass, animated by one principle, aiming at one and the same end.

The organizational focus of community in this phase was the socialist movement. Indeed, in DeLeon's eyes, the movement, if genuinely socialist, had to provide that focus. Hence, he told workingmen that the party "must, in order to be effective, be something, not outside, not separate and apart from you; it must be flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone." With that objective in mind, Party members, "conscious of their class distinction and the obligations it imposes upon them" were, "in mill, in mine, on railroad, wherever workers are exploited," "manfully striving against the forces of capitalism," their mission being to "consolidate and concentrate the proletariat of America in one irresistible [*sic*] class-conscious army." Functioning as the nucleus of such an "army," the socialist movement would be the instrument of redemption, the means by which the residual community

of the oppressed and the alienated would be transformed into a true community of freedom and harmonious interrelationship. "It has been reserved to the Socialist movement," said DeLeon, "to bring down from the mists of impracticability . . . the great moral sentiment of the brotherhood of man," one which had "animated all noble breasts since remotest antiquity." The movement "furnished . . . a solid basis" for this "lofty human sentiment," because its emergence signaled the maturation of "the material conditions" requisite "for disclosing the means for the realization of the aspiration." In its capacity, then, as the institutional expression of the class-consciousness epitomizing the proletariat at this point, the movement, in DeLeon's words, would, at the arrival of the revolutionary crisis, serve as the "one beacon light in the land burning as clear in that darkness as it is burning 'midst the clouds today; one beacon, whose steady light will serve as guide; whose tried firmness will inspire confidence; and whose rock-ribbed sides will serve as a natural point of rally from which to save civilization."<sup>50</sup>

While awaiting the time when organized socialism and the working class would become coterminous, however, the movement, representing the future order in microcosm, could afford a satisfying sense of belonging in its own right. Tracing its origins to the first International, presided over by Marx himself, the international socialist movement possessed the comforting quality of being established and ongoing; it had an intellectual and institutional heritage to bestow. To one such as DeLeon, dissatisfied with a heritage that, in his mind, isolated him from the mass of men, the international Marxist tradition was particularly alluring. This could be noted in his review of the beginnings of scientific socialism in America:

From the older, hence more experienced civilization of Europe, the breath of Collectivism was breathed into the land. With the device 'Proletarians of all countries unite!,' Collectivism itself had cast off the early Communistic vestiges with which it was at first clothed and Marxism made its appearance here as Socialism, as the compilation of the economic, ethnic and sociologic principles around which a vast Movement was crystallizing on the opposite shores of the Atlantic.

And DeLeon readily invoked that "vast Movement" when appearing as a witness in 1894 before the Committee on Corporations of the

Constitutional Convention of New York, apparently to indulge in the futile exercise of advocating Socialist provisions. He boasted: "The movement whose voice we here utter is the greatest, the most far-reaching yet recorded in civilization. It is the future. The Socialist Labor Party of America represents the American wing of a movement that encircles the globe."<sup>51</sup>

But when the movement finally reached fruition, extending its domain to the limits of the society in which it had developed, it would usher in the final and most sublime stage of proletarian community. At this juncture, "the Socialist Republic rises in all its splendor, not as a mere 'Haven of Refuge,' but as truly a 'Promised Land' to the human race, freed at last from the nightmare of class rule." Its essential pre-conditions, already in evidence, were the ineluctable product of the advancement of industrial society under the aegis of capitalism. As DeLeon put it, "Under the modern industrial order, the masses have grown into society," the change having come "by degrees with the introduction of the perfected machine, together with the increased productivity of co-operative labor," which was "necessary to the plentifulness of production that civilization requires." Hence: "Society is [today] no dislocated entity. The elements requisite for modern production—manual and directing ability—are closely joined and jointed. They are not independent of, they are dependent upon each other, like the various organs of one body; and that body social is the *working class*."<sup>52</sup>

Socially and economically, the proletariat had reached the threshold of a new order. It remained only for the workers to step across and found it. The productive system, operated completely by the working class, had attained a high level of efficiency and sophistication, making it capable of providing the material basis for the more humane community of the Socialist Republic: "an abundance," DeLeon stated, to be had "without arduous toil," and consisting "of the necessities for material existence, to the end of allowing leisure for mental and spiritual expansion." Liberated from the spectre of want, the new order would reflect the fact that "the law of existence of the working class is fraternity." It would affirm the transformation of society's members from "warring individuals . . . into citizens; from a wild mob, into a Nation." Since it was "the denial of the Class State," since within it "the shackles of wage slavery" would be "no more," the new commonwealth would reestablish the lost Eden "of the race's orig-

inal days of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—the government that rests upon man, and of man over property.”

Back to Communistic society, with its equality of rights, without distinction of sex, there being no distinction of class;—back to Communistic society, whose instinctive motto, ‘All for each, and each for all,’ caused it unconsciously to practice without preaching the morality subsequently, and down to our own days, preached but never practiced;—‘Back to Communism, and regain the olden good!’ is an imperative watchword of the Social Revolution.

Specifically, resurrecting the benign impulses of primitive man in the modern age meant

placing the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution into the hands of the people as a collective body, and substituting for the present state of planless production, industrial war, and social disorder, the Socialist or Industrial Commonwealth—a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.<sup>53</sup>

To realize this ultimate plateau of community, to animate the wretched and the disinherited by fostering among them a consciousness of a collective destiny, such would henceforth absorb all of DeLeon’s energies.

As Marxism sharpened DeLeon’s perception of the proletariat as a community, so, too, did it clarify the process, left ambiguous in *Le juif errant*, by which redemption would finally be secured. That process was outlined in the Marxian theory of class struggle, and the doctrine was taken up with enthusiasm by DeLeon. The class struggle, as he reiterated it, grew directly out of the nature of capitalism: “Given the private ownership of combined elements of production, and the capitalist class will congregate ever more into its own hands the wealth of the land, while the working class must sink to ever deeper depths of poverty and dependence, every mechanical improvement only giving fresh impetus to the exaltation of the capitalist class and to the degradation of the workingman.” Eventually, “the philosophic line of demarcation between the contending elements is sharply drawn; the class that lives upon profits, *i.e.* upon the labor of others, and the class that draws no revenues from profits, *i.e.* that lives from its own labor, are brought face to face. From that moment confusion . . . is at end,



and the onward course is clear." Thus, the stage was set for a conflict of apocalyptic proportions:

The pregnant point that underlies these pregnant facts is that, between the Working Class and the Capitalist Class, there is an irrepressible conflict, a class struggle for life. No glib tongued politician can vault over it, no capitalist professor or official statistician can argue it away; no capitalist parson can veil it; no labor fakir can straddle it; no 'reform' architect can bridge it over. It crops up in all manner of ways, . . . in ways that disconcert all the plans and all the schemes of those who would deny or ignore it. It is a struggle that will not down, and must be ended only by either the total subjugation of the Working Class, or the abolition of the Capitalist Class.

Here DeLeon inserted his own arch-demon, the Roman Catholic Church, which, as noted earlier, he expected to emerge as the rallying point for the capitalist class in its final confrontation with socialism. But he had no doubt about the outcome. As he visualized it:

These two political bodies [the Church and the Socialists] will attract, each to its own affinities. The capitalist Protestant, Jew, Catholic and whatnot will be Romanized . . . On the other hand, the proletarian and intelligent Protestant, Jew, Catholic and whatnot will be Socialitized;—and thus the great final debacle which has been brewing through the ages for the final overthrow of class rule, accordingly, for the final emancipation of the human race from the subjection to property, will take place.<sup>54</sup>

The class struggle thesis especially appealed to DeLeon, because its cataclysmic depiction of social change satisfied a deeply felt need for a dramatic and thoroughgoing resolution of his vexing problem of personal alienation. It promised a cathartic experience, a society-wide purgation of the conditions that isolated men from one another. It acted, therefore, to salve his impatience for relief, an impatience that had earlier contributed to his disillusionment with the temporizing attitudes and inconclusive results of reform movements. The strong desire for a rapid and fundamental restructuring of the social landscape was, at times, clearly evidenced. Former fellow Nationalists, for instance, recalled the occasion of DeLeon's scheduled address at an anniversary celebration of the movement's founding Boston club, where "it was decided, before his address . . . , to 'comb down,' a little,

Daniel DeLeon's ardor, for it was feared that six years ahead was somewhat too early to place the date [of the revolution]." Similarly, nearly two decades later, DeLeon was reported to have told an IWW audience that "we don't want Socialism a thousand years hence; we want it in our lifetime, we want it in ten years, and we know that it can be done." And, to the chagrin of later Communist Party critics, his literal interpretation of the Marxian doctrine of catastrophic class conflict kept him from making formal provision in his own theory for "a transition period" between capitalism and socialism, as did Lenin. In DeLeon's reading of history, "Revolutions triumphed, whenever they did triumph, by asserting themselves and marching straight upon their goal."<sup>55</sup>

Given his belief in an impending class upheaval, he was wont to look upon "modern society" as in "a state of decomposition." Its "institutions, long held as of all time and for all time," were, he believed, "crumbling." Touring the country, he concluded that: "Everywhere the field is promiseful. The people are ready to listen to Socialism. All their false gods are played out. Above the wrecked and mangled remains of these rises the unsullied sun of the social revolution." With the institutional and ideological supports of the capitalist system quickly eroding away, the course the revolutionary movement should pursue was, to DeLeon, quite clear:

The organizations of the revolution of our generation must be the most uncompromising of any that yet appeared on the stage of history. The program of this revolution consists not in any one detail. It demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist system and its system of wage slavery; the total extinction of class rule is its object. Nothing short of that—whether as a first, a temporary, or any other sort of step can at this late date receive recognition in the camp of the modern revolution.

There was no room for trimming, for simple "inclinations" toward socialism. Forthrightness was the dictate of the age. Consequently, the seeking of reforms, compromises, or other half-measures was not to be tolerated: "Give us a truce with your 'Reforms!' There is a sickening air of moral mediocrity in all such petty movements of petty, childish aspirations at times like these, when gigantic man-issues are thundering at every man's door for admission and solution." Even the election and admission of socialists to parliamentary assemblies would not in

any way temper the basic irreconcilability of labor and capital, nor the hard-line position that issued from it. David Goldstein, who was for a time in the SLP with DeLeon, gave eloquent testimony to the point. Goldstein remembered DeLeon telling him of his plans should he, DeLeon, win the seat in the New York State Assembly for which he was currently campaigning on the Party ticket:

'If I am elected to the N.Y. Assembly' (as he expected to be), 'my time will not be spent in Albany, trying to get this or that reform measure adopted. I'll create a national sensation by delivering a speech that will cause me to be carried bodily out of the Assembly. Then I will travel throughout the country addressing thousands of people on how the politicians, the hirelings of capitalism, persecute a workingclass representative when he exposes their masters, the capitalist class, and why that class should be driven from power.'<sup>56</sup>

Defining the struggle between the classes in such stark terms put DeLeon in a paradoxical position as a theoretician. While he was a life-long advocate of peaceful methods and a believer in their efficacy, the logic of his view of class conflict tended to push him in the direction of accepting the necessity of a violent solution. The horns of this dilemma were difficult to avoid when words like "life and death" and "extermination" were used to describe the essential character of the class struggle. Apocalyptic language easily lent itself to amplification in the phraseology of violence, as DeLeon amply demonstrated. He once warned prospective opponents of the SLP that: "Whoever and whatever stands in the way of the Socialist Labor Party will be crushed to dust. 'Smash!' is the motto. Clear the way!" Metaphors used to conjure the image of the accession of the socialist republic bespoke like inspiration: it would "blast the rule of capitalism" and "smite the shackles off the limbs of Labor." And in much the same vein, he observed that: "It is only the path to servitude that needs the gentle; the path to freedom calls for the ruder hand." Besides affecting his rhetoric, the violence connoted by DeLeon's rigid reading of the class struggle doctrine found its way directly into his enunciation of theory. For example, in the midst of a press debate with IWW protagonists of "direct action," when he was defending the wisdom of not completely forswearing the legitimate political process, he was forced to concede that: "Most likely, . . . the political expression of the I.W.W. will not

be afforded the time for triumph at the polls. Most likely the necessities of capitalism will, before then, drive it to some lawless act that will call forth resistance." That DeLeon really regarded this as the most likely scenario for the start of the final confrontation is suggested by an account of a socialist contemporary, John Spargo, reconstructing a discussion he had had with DeLeon many years earlier. In the course of an explanation of "what the class struggle was" and using a city map for illustration, DeLeon was reported to have said: " 'In this city, if you would take a map of this city—on this street corner is the 71st regiment armory, on this street corner is some other regimental armory [etc.] . . . Those things are deliberately planned that way—that's all plotted. The master class is far-sighted. *All* these places were placed where they are in anticipation of the inevitable revolt and when it occurs it is their [the capitalists'] intention to take possession of these places and *mow* the workers all down.' " <sup>57</sup>

If DeLeon experienced any discomfort at the inconsistency between his forebodings of armed clashes on the one hand, and his arguments in favor of peaceful and legal political activity on the other, it seems to have been more than compensated for by the peculiar satisfactions derived from seeing labor and capital as engaged in a fierce contest to the death. <sup>58</sup>

The Marxian doctrine's firm assurance that labor would indeed triumph and inaugurate the socialist republic—that such was foreordained by the iron logic of history—was yet another reason why it so attracted DeLeon. Marxism reinforced the simple optimism of *Le juif errant* with the vaunted predictive power of science. For DeLeon, "the test" of scientific validity was "prescience—the power to foresee": "Has it foreseen correctly?—has it not? If it has, it is scientific, and true; if it has not, it is nonsense and false. If it has foreseen correctly, then may it be safely banked upon as a cardinal principle, like any mathematical theorem; if it has not foreseen correctly, then should it be discarded as a chimera." Of Karl Marx's prescience DeLeon was completely convinced, for he was satisfied that: "Events refute anti-Marxism, and demonstrate it the opposite of Science. From each recurring refutation of anti-Marxism, and demonstration of its unscientific foundation and spirit, Marxism itself rises re-confirmed; its scientific merits re-demonstrated; taller in inches, stronger of voice; with ever more ears catching its vibrant, clear note; . . . ever larger masses marshalling under its banner." <sup>59</sup> Therefore, when the doctrine pre-

dicted the eventual victory of the working class and the forging by it of a true community, it might, in his words, "be safely banked upon."

The Marxian idea of historical inevitability in fact had a considerable impact on DeLeon, causing him to fall prey, at times, to a rigid determinism. Expressions of the individual will that ran counter to the universal, immutable laws discovered by Marx could not, to DeLeon's mind, possibly avail, a conclusion that neatly coincided with his already pronounced antiindividualism, since it sharply diminished the effective sphere of the individual act. Accordingly, he averred: "We do not cut out our life tasks for ourselves. They are cut out for us. Inversely to the Shakespearan [*sic*] dictum—our tasks are rough-hewn for us by circumstances; we shape them into final shape."<sup>60</sup> For the same reason, he ridiculed as "nonsensical" a plank in a reformer's platform that advocated "absolute freedom to think." DeLeon scornfully objected that "absolute laws controlled his [man's] thoughts, and he had as little 'freedom' to think as an acorn had freedom to grow into a bramble bush." He interpreted the appearance of a more liberal "Modernist" movement within the Catholic Church, not as a fortuitous occurrence, but as a response "to a resistless Evolutionary Force" whose presence could be noted "everywhere," "Modernism" being "the feature of our century." This "Force" was invoked when DeLeon quixotically sought in 1894 to have the New York Constitutional Convention adopt socialism. He told the Convention's Committee on Corporations: "We . . . come to you, who represent the forces we are contending against, to invite you, for your own sakes and the sakes of your descendants, to aid us in the sense in which we ask and to cease to resist the irresistible [*sic*]." And even when the further progress of the Evolutionary Force met obstructions, the resulting delay could not but be temporary: "The genius of progress is not to be jockeyed. When conditions are unfavorable to the removal of that which blocks the path of progress, the obstacle is not 'saved'; its removal is only adjourned."<sup>61</sup>

DeLeon's utter faith that society was on a fixed upward course naturally impelled him to a boundless, unquenchable optimism whenever he contemplated the future. From the very outset of his socialist career, his eyes saw "the wage-class . . . surely marching to a new social order," and his ears heard a "higher civilization . . . knocking at our doors." He persistently maintained that his movement, which aimed "to emancipate the working class," would "certainly accomplish" its

purpose, for, as he said, "Our eyes are fixed upon the legislative, executive and the judiciaries of all the States, together with the Federal White House and the Capitol, and all of them, without a doubt are bound to fall into our hands." In a like effusion of positive prediction, when considering posterity's judgment of the Haymarket martyrs, DeLeon averred: "Though I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, . . . my reading of history shows to me that the day must surely come when . . . a colossal monument will be raised by the genius of the Co-operative Commonwealth, to commemorate the names of those who did not falter in their duty, even in the darkest hour of their holy cause." Moreover, even apparent adversities were regarded as portents of future success. The extension of American empire to the Pacific as a result of Dewey's victory over the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in 1898 was greeted as "a milestone that points with certainty to the imminence of the culminating Revolution of all Revolutions—the Social Revolution, that will give birth to the Socialist Republic—it may well be hailed with joy." And the comparatively meager general election vote totals collected by the SLP were not a cause for concern, because, according to DeLeon's analysis, "The backwardness of the Socialist movement in America is on the surface only. Whatever the thermometer of the Socialist vote . . . may register, the temperature is rising." In this, he sustained his faith by favorably comparing the size of the SLP vote to that of political abolitionists in 1840, "i.e. not quite 25 years before their abolition programme was actually carried out," ignoring, of course, the historical wreckage of numerous other reform movements whose objectives were never realized.<sup>62</sup>

Such confidence in the future probably best explains DeLeon's continued admiration, mentioned in the preceding chapter, for Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, long after he had repudiated its author and the movement it had inspired. The book's sanguine projections, indeed its very setting in the socialist society of the future, invested it with an enduring fascination. *Looking Backward's* vantage point in the post-revolutionary epoch was, for DeLeon, an especially useful one for voicing the supreme optimism of certainty. Hence, " 'Looking Backward,' " he once wrote, "the tide of progress has not receded; on the contrary, its swell is rising in the majestic proportions that the issue demands."<sup>63</sup>

"Looking Backward" on the present no doubt also convinced DeLeon that the Socialist Labor Party definitely was "an organization of

the Twentieth Century, and of Twentieth Century conditions." Its correct theoretical foundations made it the most authentic representative of what was just beyond the temporal horizon, and therefore its strength lay, not in the numbers it commanded at any given moment, but in the soundness of its principles. As DeLeon stated it: "A strong Movement, strong in the consciousness of its soundness in premises and conclusions,—such a movement cares not if it is successless here, there or anywhere. It knows it must prevail." In the full expectation that genuine success, in the form of the socialist republic, would most quickly follow from strict adherence to principle, he was usually willing to forgo the more ephemeral victories that could be gained immediately from compromise. This could be seen particularly in DeLeon's advocacy of socialist dual unionism, which proved to be an extremely divisive issue, ultimately contributing to a major split in the SLP and causing bitter conflict among trade unionists. During a debate on the question with Boot and Shoe Workers' Union leaders, DeLeon explained: "On that principle [dual unionism] we organized and we knew full well that we were not going to have rapid growth, we knew full well that we would grow very slowly, we knew full well that we might not grow for a time, but we knew this, that though all other things would break down we would ever stand, for unlike the unions that go down and come up smiling, we could not go down, and was [*sic*] bound on the whole to progress, and to look the future calmly in the face." Putting the matter even more squarely in a verbal duel with socialist opponent Job Harriman, he declared: "[Our] policy . . . is to go slow, gather . . . men in, hold up clear the principle. If a wrong is done to a Union, if the rank and file is being deceived, why, then, even if that whole rank and file rises against you and denounces you, stand your ground; *stand it*—because the day will come when that rank and file will remember that *you* told them the truth . . . Then you will find progress; then will it come with rapid strides, for that real work will have been noted. Unless there is real work back of it, there is no progress worth mentioning." But this belief in the future was so central to DeLeon's thoughts that it appeared in his justification for the opposite course years later, when, chastened by repeated setbacks, he felt compelled to explore the possibility of union with the more numerous and influential Socialist Party. The prospect of the inevitable compromise that such a venture would entail was made less onerous by DeLeon's undiminished faith that, in the end, the princi-

ples of the SLP would be vindicated, that "ninety-nine per cent, if not the full hundred per cent of its planks, methods and principles" would be "certain to be in force when the movement turns the lap to the 'homestretch.'" <sup>64</sup>

And what was true in the realm of ideology was also true for the personal adversities that had to be faced. The assurance of inevitable redemption put the tribulations of the present in an acceptable context and thereby rendered them more bearable. "The increased arduousness the Socialist knows," said DeLeon, "is amply compensated for by the increased power to the cause of human progress that comes from certainty." That human progress would culminate in the socialist republic, he elsewhere stated, "sweetens the present bitterness of the lot of every proletarian who is conscious of his class distinction and the obligation it imposes upon him." Adhering to the position that present sufferings were merely a temporary historical necessity for the proletariat in the course of fulfilling its mission, DeLeon scorned those who made a display of their "sacrifices" for the movement. And he refused to consider himself martyred in any sense by the problems, financial or otherwise, that beset him as a result of his commitment to socialism. According to his second wife, DeLeon was moved only by the idea of revolutionizing his society: "What an idea! An idea that will enable humanity to found a civilization . . . that will blossom with a beauty and a glory far beyond our sublimest dreams. To DeLeon and me this idea was full compensation for any hardships we may have encountered and experienced. Who would not feel compensated, warmed and uplifted by the majesty and grandeur of the idea and its implications!" <sup>65</sup>

DeLeon's orientation toward the future was accompanied by an inclination to denigrate what he regarded as the emblems of bygone eras. To associate something or someone with the dead past was implicitly a negative reference, for, as he had the "Uncle Sam" character in one of his dialogues say: "[Nearly] all [nations] . . . , especially the civilized nations, are distinguished for marching forward upon the ruins . . . of their past. It is only by thus casting away things that a nation had, but has outgrown, that it can at all make any progress." <sup>66</sup> Also, failure to "cast away" useless relics played into the hands of the ruling class, since it permitted the encouragement of "superstitious reverence," which DeLeon considered "the cornerstone of despotism, on the one hand, and of its supplement, slavery, on the other." "Sacred



things are of all time and for all time. They are not tinkered with; they may not be tinkered with. For the purposes of despotism, it is all one whether a thing is sacred, or whether it is held sacred. The policy, accordingly, is to promote the superstition, in behalf of a principle useful to usurpation, that it is sacred."<sup>67</sup>

Thus, DeLeon, when lecturing on women's suffrage, awkwardly described certain opponents of that reform as "beings that are atavistic manifestations of the oyster-stage in biology, the stage of mentality that, clinging to the sea-weed-covered rock of the Present-Past, perceives not the changes that are going on in shore formations and in the current of the tides—with the exception of such oyster antediluvianists, whose occasional poetical vein instead of promoting Progress, would retard it by making the apotheosis of the Past, at the shrine of which they worship, veritable pagans." In similar fashion, the essentially reactionary quality of Populist Tom Watson's mind condemned him *per se*: "Man evolving backward to the anthropoidal ape; man surrendering the opportunities which the higher evolutionary plane places within his reach, and surrendering them because of the peculiar and transitionally incidental forfeiture of the paradisaical features enjoyed by his tree-climbing forebears—such is Watsonic psychology . . . It clings, like an oyster to its rock, to the economic and sociologic crudities of an age gone by." And so, too, were DeLeon's former colleagues in the academic world, the professors of the "old-style" universities, castigated as throwbacks.<sup>68</sup>

Nor were specific antagonists alone disposed of by a tarring with the fetid brush of the past. Individualism, prominent in DeLeon's catalogue of error, was also perceived as a thing that should properly have become extinct. As he read human history: "The isolation, superimposition and exclusion of the entity [the ego] was a type of that barbarism from which man had evolved. It became bigger and bigger the further back man went in history, smaller and smaller the further he advanced." Moreover, as the radical species of the individualist genus, anarchism reflected as well the mortmain of an earlier epoch and as a result "would throw mankind back to the primitive state." Indicative of this were remarks DeLeon uttered early in a speech devoted to the subject:

I shall show you that Anarchism is not the latest, but, so far from being the latest, is the very oldest conception of a revolutionary movement. I shall show you that it is old, stale, and played out. I

shall show you that it is the child of infant social organization. I shall show you that whatever manifestation of it we have today is purely an atavistic revival of an old, old idea.

I shall show you that, as humanity progresses, individual acts wane in strength, and I shall show you why, today, they are simply flashes in the pan. . . .<sup>69</sup>

Other nonsocialist doctrines and movements were also treated as throwbacks, including an earlier DeLeon enthusiasm, the single tax. After meeting a single-taxer during a lecture tour, DeLeon reported sardonically to his readers that he had come upon an "*avis rara*, a Dodo, a lingering specimen of the extinct . . . 'Single Tax.' "<sup>70</sup> Equally curious phenomena were to be found among the ranks of organized labor. Writing in 1893, following Terence V. Powderly's deposal as Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, DeLeon opined that Powderly "was a vestige of an era that is fast passing away—the era when the current of the Labor Movement brought 'accidents' to the top . . . [The late General Assembly has] sounded the opening of a new era . . . The Knights of Labor have set the example in plying the broom with firmness." Not only was the leadership of conventional labor organizations perceived to be backward, however. These organizations themselves, by virtue of their structure, methods, and guiding philosophy, were thought by DeLeon to have been left behind by the relentless lockstep of progress. He termed the typical established trade union "old-style," to distinguish it from the modern, socialist-oriented successor he now wished to build. The old-style organization, DeLeon argued, "is a degeneration back to the old starting point of the bourgeois or capitalist class; and though it decks itself . . . with the name of 'Labor' it is but a caricature, because a belated reproduction, of the old guild system!" Consequently, its struggles were waged "upon antiquated lines," one of the more common examples of which was the boycott. Of this tactic DeLeon wrote: "The farce of boycott has been played again and again . . . A trust cannot be boycotted . . . The small business man can be affected by the boycott. The boycott was of importance when the small business man was of importance. When he became a relic of bygone days, the boycott was sapped of all its strength, rendered useless by new conditions, and should be relegated to the rear." And while the outworn nature of the old-style unions made them merely useless, that of the Catholic Church lent it a decidedly sinister cast, inasmuch as the church threatened to bring

forth a new edition of its past infamies in the service of the capitalist class. DeLeon frequently reminded his readers of this fact by identifying the "Ultramontanes" with their heyday in the Dark Ages and during the reign of feudalism. And their efforts to whitewash their past drew a rebuke in the form of a quotation from a speech of Don Quixote to Sancho Panza—" *'Peores meneallo'*—you make the stench of the stenchful past only worse by stirring it up."<sup>71</sup>

DeLeon's antipathy to the remnants of the dysfunctional past was most strikingly revealed in the manner in which he treated the details of his own past. Facts that did not accord with his new self-image were obscured, or they were completely obliterated and replaced with fabrications that better served his purpose. In general, he was quite reticent and elliptical about his background.<sup>72</sup> For instance, he never openly acknowledged that he had been a practicing attorney prior to his arrival on the radical scene, probably because the legal profession was popularly associated in the mind of the average worker with the large corporations that retained many of its members.<sup>73</sup> Nor, for that matter, did he ever publicly admit that he had, in 1884, worked for the election of Grover Cleveland, who ten years later was to use federal troops to crush the great Pullman strike. His years as a polite reformer also escaped mention, no doubt because his credibility as a severe critic of reform might have suffered from the disclosure. And for much the same reasons, DeLeon was disingenuous about his relationship to Henry George and the single tax, as was demonstrated in the preceding chapter.

What he did relate about his past was obviously designed to create the flattering but erroneous impression that he had always been an incipient radical. Thus, he once told the reform journalist, Henry Austin, that as a seven-year-old child he had voiced opposition to the institution of slavery then thriving on Curaçao, and the anecdote is dutifully repeated in Socialist Labor Party literature.<sup>74</sup> DeLeon also showed no hesitation about reporting his involvement with the Cuban exile movement shortly after he had emigrated to America, since it contributed to the picture of himself that he now wished to put forth.

However, when selecting events from his past to foster the desired image, he was not above injecting palpable falsehoods into his recollections. An illustration is provided by a speech DeLeon gave in 1890 at a large meeting honoring the veteran radical journalist John Swinton. In his opening remarks, he stated that he had first seen Swinton

ten years before in that same hall on the occasion of a memorial service for Karl Marx. Seemingly, he wanted to convey to his auditors the notion that he had been in the labor movement for a full decade and was himself a seasoned veteran. This was clearly untrue, and no one familiar with DeLeon's background could have credited it. First, the memorial service was held, not ten, but seven years prior, Marx's death having occurred in 1883. And second, even if the three-year error is overlooked as a simple lapse of memory, it is impossible to believe that the young political scientist—just then beginning his teaching career at conservative Columbia College and still innocent of politics, even of the tame mugwumpery he would take up a year later—would have attended so “unrespectable” a gathering amidst an exotic horde of radicals and workers, many of whom were certainly non-English-speaking immigrants dwelling in the city's crime-ridden slums.<sup>75</sup>

A considerable lack of candor also characterized DeLeon's account of his religious and ethnic origins. “Marxism rejects the theory that man is a clam wedded to the rock of his nativity,” he once contended, and he quite literally applied that precept to his own case, totally expunging Judaism from his past.<sup>76</sup> In its place he concocted a fanciful tale of having been born into a wealthy, aristocratic Venezuelan family of Spanish Catholic stock, descended from the explorer Ponce DeLeon, no less. This tale thoroughly obscured the truth from even his closest friends and associates, who accepted DeLeon's word on faith and persisted in repeating his preposterous story in their own writings.<sup>77</sup> The matter of DeLeon's Jewish ancestry was not even discussed with his son,<sup>78</sup> so little did he wish the truth to surface.

That he would divest himself of the Jewishness that for years had been a burden to him is not surprising, but the particular fabrication presented in its stead, the noble, Catholic lineage, is puzzling, and its meaning can only be surmised. Of course, the high-born personage, raised in a church historically antithetical to progress, who declasses himself valorously in the interests of a transcendent altruism—such is the stuff of heroic legend and DeLeon could have selected it simply to cast himself in a more favorable light. A keen student of Roman history from his university days, he had occasion to focus his gaze upon possible objects of emulation in its pages, patricians who had set themselves against the interests of their own class in support of the plebeians. They may have provided the model for the romanticized

version of his derivation—a conjecture buttressed by DeLeon's description of two figures in particular, Spurius Cassius and Marcus Manlius. Cassius, an important leader, "was no ordinary patrician. With him achievements did not lag behind birth . . . Cassius perceived that not one of the laws scored by the Plebs Leaders at all touched the cause of the evil [the disparity of wealth]. The evil had to be attacked at its root. Despite his patrician economic interests, he proposed a law to re-allot the land, and make provision to prevent the re-occurrence of the disparity of wealth, which, he foresaw, was driving Rome to the brink of ruin." And concerning Manlius, the hero of Capitoline Hill, DeLeon wrote: "Seeing one day one of his soldiers who had fought with him dragged to prison for debt, [he] stopped the tip-staves, emptied his purse in the interest of the afflicted plebeian, and declared that so long as he had a farthing no Roman should suffer want. His attitude and proposals flew in the face of the property-holding class."<sup>79</sup>

However, it is possible that DeLeon invented his imaginary heritage in order to meet the need for catharsis through dramatic confrontation, the source of the appeal the class struggle doctrine had for him. His personal history could thus represent a fundamental clash between an ideal embodiment of the past, in the form of his assumed feudal, Catholic origins, and an equally ideal symbol of the future, his proletarian identity, with the latter naturally emerging the victor. Since the inquiries of friends and foes would inevitably touch upon his origins, he may have reasoned that the most appropriate response would depict in his individual experience the sustaining vision of redemptive apocalypse.

Whatever DeLeon's initial motivation for adopting a bogus past, there are indications that he may have actually internalized it, believing, in a sense, his own lies. He made allusions to it when the situation did not require it and when a person who was consciously lying would normally not have belabored his lies. For instance, DeLeon rebuked Tom Watson for failing to exhibit "chivalry, as she is understood in the code to which I was trained," and in a speech at the third annual convention of the IWW in 1907, he disclaimed any dogmatism in his adherence to the teachings of Marx by asserting: "I did not throw over the church in which I was born to stop kneeling before one Pope and then kneel down before another." Moreover, a certain degree of identification with aristocratic virtues glimmered ironically through the

socialist ardor permeating his writings. He praised Benjamin Franklin as "the one great nobleman of the American revolution," and, in likening the prominent figure of Roman antiquity, Camillus, to the present-day Marcus Hanna, he qualified the comparison by doubting "that the vulgar Jerry Sneak of the bourgeois could compare, either in point of breeding or of culture, with that distinguished patrician." But the most extraordinary evidence that a changed perception of his origins had imbedded itself firmly in his consciousness came in an article where he disdained, as if he were not one of them, "the apostate Jews one reads of in history, who endangered their health by an excessive diet of pork, in their anxiety to conceal their extraction."<sup>80</sup>

Having detached himself completely from his Jewish identity, even to the extent of denying his Jewish birth, DeLeon deprecated and explicitly rejected Judaism as a legitimate identity, and he declined to recognize it as a meaningful concept in sociopolitical discourse. Striving for emancipation "not as man, but as Jew" was in his view a "false posture," as was "philo-Semitism in general," for "Semitism" (that is, Judaism) was not a genuine social entity, being "without a principle or mission, unique and born from its own spiritual womb, and without a unique, exclusive ethnic basis." The appellation "Semitism," according to DeLeon, connoted nothing more than a perverse reflex of Gentile theology; without that theology "the bottom and the bonds on which Semitism stands and that hold it together, fall out and melt away." And in light of this, he held that those who still defined themselves as Jews manifested an aspect "of human nature that finds a morbid delight in glory, even if its halo be borrowed, or even if, at times, the halo may turn into a thorny crown."<sup>81</sup>

Needless to say, the birth of Zionism in 1896 found DeLeon unresponsive. A Jewish nation was one solution to the anxiety that had sent him on his restless quest, but it represented to him nothing more than the permanent establishment of Jewish separateness—Ahasuerus writ large. After imbibing the heady elixir of world-wide proletarian brotherhood enshrined in the socialist creed, he could not countenance the notion of constructing a state on the limited basis of a single chosen people. As he said: "Socialism is essentially international. Nativism or nativistic aims are repugnant to Socialist thought." And concerning those who claimed to be both socialists and Zionists, he pointed out that: "In the very nature of Socialist-Zionism, the Socialism in its program can not be a thing to be striven after now; in the very nature of its program, the only thing upon which Zionist-Socialism can and

must bend its present energies is the restoration of a nationality."<sup>82</sup>

DeLeon's decision to abandon Judaism as an identity and his unwillingness to see it as a viable social or political entity led to a parallel burning of bridges in his personal life. Bertha, his second wife, was not Jewish, and while he did not by any means become a practicing Christian, he did follow his own earlier advice on the method available for dealing with ethnic-religious tensions by regularly celebrating Christmas with his wife and children. Moreover, his repudiation of the Jewish community and its conventional aspirations permanently alienated his aging mother, the measure of whose chagrin can be gauged in her request to be buried upon her death in Curaçao without his knowledge, a request that was in fact honored.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, the effort to leave Judaism behind him may have figured as well in DeLeon's later, also irreparable rift with his son Solon, with whom he also had political disagreements.<sup>84</sup> Solon was the only child of DeLeon's first marriage to survive to adulthood and was thus the only living link with his father's Jewish past.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Solon was the only one of the DeLeon children whose political ideas were of concern to his father; the others did not become involved in Party or labor movement work, and DeLeon did not evince any regret over this disinterest.<sup>86</sup> Hence, it is entirely possible that DeLeon regarded his first-born's ideological purity as of paramount importance, precisely because, subliminally, the youth embodied the last extant tie with his own Jewishness, and it was therefore imperative that the son mirror in every particular the political stance of the father in order to effect a final severance from the past. When Solon differed with him, the ensuing breach was infused with especial bitterness.

Through the tandem agency, then, of Eugène Sue and Karl Marx, DeLeon remade himself. The burden of Judaism was set down; a new, proletarian identity was taken up. As DeLeon himself may have been aware, the Marxian system that would henceforth chart his course had a peculiar appropriateness in that its picture of historical development seemed to ring the changes in the unfolding chapters of his life: from his imagined feudal nativity, through his bourgeois phases of academic and reformer, to his immersion in the great proletarian swell that would carry all before it. It would remain his fervent hope that Marxism's prophecy would prove as scientifically valid as its view of history, and that his future would correspond as closely to the prophecy as had his past to the view of history.

## 5 *The Party of Socialism*

DeLeon's conversion to the tenets of Marxism led logically to his joining the Socialist Labor Party in 1890. The Party was, after all, a direct descendant of the first international workers' movement organized by Karl Marx. In 1872, Marx had the movement's headquarters transferred from London to New York in the wake of factional blood-letting between socialist and anarchist members. But four years later, the ailing organization passed from the scene, and its largely German-emigré membership reconstituted itself soon after as the American-based Socialistic Labor Party,<sup>1</sup> later to become the American branch of the Second International. The SLP, then, seemed an authentic representative of the second, class-conscious phase of proletarian community, and the new recruit threw himself vigorously into the work of the Party, rapidly ascending to a position of major influence in its councils. From the date of DeLeon's enrollment until his death in 1914, the fortunes of the man and the party would be indissolubly linked.

During that twenty-four year period, the extent of his involvement in virtually every facet of SLP activity was truly extraordinary. Any explanation of DeLeon's enormous impact on the Party would have to take account of the volume and variety of work he performed in its behalf. As numerous earlier references indicate, DeLeon regularly appeared on lecture and debate platforms all over the United States to win support for the socialist cause. Lecturing and debating for the Party also made him a natural choice for a place on its ballot at election time, and he waged several campaigns in which he variously sought to capture for socialism the governorship of New York and seats in the New York State Assembly and in Congress. Nor was his



role as a principal Party voice limited to the United States, since he served as the SLP's chief delegate at the congresses of the Second International in Europe, attending the conclaves held in Zurich (1893), Amsterdam (1904), Stuttgart (1907), and Copenhagen (1910).<sup>2</sup>

Significant, too, were DeLeon's pioneering efforts to make socialist and labor-oriented literature generally available to the American working class. He was instrumental in establishing the Party publishing house, the New York Labor News Company, as the first press to publish revolutionary books and pamphlets in English on a large scale. He spent untold hours applying his linguistic talents to the arduous task of translating European works for publication, including, in addition to the Sue novels, Engels' *Socialism: From Utopia to Science*, several of Kautsky's better-known short works, Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *The Gotha Program*, Bebel's *Woman under Socialism*, and Lassalle's drama *Johann Gottlieb Franz von Sickingen*.<sup>3</sup>

Probably DeLeon's most remarkable achievement, however, was in the realm of socialist journalism. When the *People* commenced publication in 1891, superseding the *Workmen's Advocate* as the SLP's official English-language organ, DeLeon became assistant editor and then, a few months later, editor, the initial opportunity for the promotion having been provided by editor Lucien Sanial's attendance at the Brussels meeting of the International that summer. But once ensconced in the editor's chair, DeLeon did not relinquish it until his death, and under his leadership the *People* emerged as the foremost expositor of the Marxist viewpoint in the country. In 1900, the paper, originally a weekly, became the world's first English-language socialist daily, a financially exhausting venture for the Party, but one which continued at DeLeon's behest until shortly before his death, when the burden of daily publication finally became too great. During his twenty-three years as Party editor, he took upon himself a tremendous workload. All of the unsigned editorials, from April 5, 1891, through February 22, 1914, covering a bewildering array of subjects, were penned by DeLeon personally. After the paper went daily, he was producing an editorial nearly every day and wrote a total of some six thousand of these brief essays during the period of daily publication alone. In addition, he contributed articles, reports, "Uncle Sam-Brother Jonathan" dialogues, and, judging from the small size of his staff, a considerable portion of the news copy.<sup>4</sup>

A commitment of this magnitude followed from DeLeon's total identification with the Party; as he had immersed himself in the proletariat as a general concept, so, too, did he now immerse himself in this organizational expression of the proletariat in its class-conscious form. DeLeon did not copyright any of his writings in his own name or draw any royalties from them to support himself and his family; instead, all rights were vested in the Party publishing agency, thus blurring any distinction between himself and the organization that might have arisen on this account. Nor did he wish his superior academic attainments to inhibit his complete integration into a party of workingmen. "For many years," remarked Joseph Schlossberg, "out of respect, he was addressed as 'professor,' until his protestations took effect and he became Comrade DeLeon."<sup>5</sup>

Refusing to copyright his writings, declining special titles of respect for his erudition, and even discouraging applause from his lecture audiences, DeLeon was the epitome of self-effacement in Party affairs, a trait that can be further observed in his relationship to the SLP's formal authority structure. At no time in his many years in the organization did he hold a major national office, although given his singular importance in the movement, he certainly could have had one had he desired it. And he scrupulously deferred to the authority of the National Executive Committee and the Party convention, at whose pleasure he served as editor of the Party journal. A particularly striking illustration of DeLeon's deliberate low profile occurred in 1908, when the SLP was pursuing unity with the Socialist Party. DeLeon opened an address on the subject thus:

Almost immediately upon the issuing of the Unity Resolution by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, a number of acquaintances, and many who were no acquaintances, approached me with the request for a public expression of opinion in *The People*, from me, on the move. I declined. My reasons were that, in my editorial capacity, I had no right to comment upon an act of the National Executive Committee; and that in my individual capacity I had no right to space in *The People* until the matter should come before the Party membership on referendum. I yielded, however, so far . . . as to express, from this independent platform, the views that I have on this subject . . . I shall take the additional precaution of stating right here, at the start, and expressly, that I do not here represent the Socialist Labor Party; that I am not speaking in its name; that I do not stand here in my

official capacity in the Party and not even as a Party member. I speak here simply as one of the many people active in the Socialist Movement, and merely exercising the right of thought and speech.

By prefacing his remarks with this elaborate disclaimer, DeLeon was acting in accordance with his firm belief that one "will never find the [true] revolutionist putting himself above the organization." It is not surprising, then, that the Party could, in a brochure about its press, describe the editor of the official English-language organ as "modest and unassuming."<sup>6</sup>

The irony in this, however, was that the will of the Party was, more often than not and more frequently as time went on, DeLeon's faithful echo. When he enrolled in the Party, it was a small, weak body composed largely of unassimilated immigrants and related only marginally, if at all, to the pulse of the American polity.<sup>7</sup> He, as a talented, well-educated, English-speaking radical who had already achieved some prominence as a writer and speaker in left-wing circles, was regarded as an especially valuable acquisition for the movement and was enthusiastically received by its membership.<sup>8</sup> Given the situation, it was probably inevitable that DeLeon's energy, ability, and strength of personality would come to dominate the Party and that his views would, for the most part, shape policy. Hence, instead of his identity disappearing in the collective identity of the SLP, the latter tended to become the responsive reflex of the former—an enlarging mirror reflecting DeLeon's own image.

DeLeon, though, chose to remain oblivious to the fact. He insisted: "No man makes the Socialist Labor Party. It is the Socialist Labor Party that makes its men . . . Its officers have not dropped down into their positions from the sky. They are a product of the organization . . . He who aims at capturing or killing off the Socialist Labor Party must address himself to the task of capturing or killing off the Socialist Labor Party itself." A favorite mode of his for enunciating doctrine was to personify socialism; to treat it as a single, unified being speaking with one voice—"Socialism knows"; "Socialism answers"; "Socialism has . . . argued"; "What concern is it of Socialism . . . ?"<sup>9</sup> It never seemed to occur to him that socialism might not be so clearly unitary a thing, nor that the one voice with which it supposedly spoke was really his own, slightly amplified.

With the SLP often appearing to function as an institutional alter

ego for DeLeon, dissidents within the Party and critics without it charged him with being a "dictator," a "boss," a "pope," and a "czar."<sup>10</sup> One-man rule, however, did not accurately describe DeLeon's relationship to the Party. Although he usually prevailed on controversial issues, it was always with the backing of a majority of the National Executive Committee, the Party convention, or the rank and file voting in referendum.<sup>11</sup>

And in some cases, he did not prevail. Solon DeLeon, in an interview, reminisced about an incident in which a subcommittee of the National Executive had overruled his father, causing the elder DeLeon to emerge from his meeting with the group in a mood Solon called "blistering angry," followed by an elated subcommittee member who boasted that "we gave DeLeon a dose of his own medicine." After the Party's Cleveland section sent representatives in 1895 to a meeting whose announced purpose was to mount an independent labor party for forthcoming local elections, DeLeon tried to convince the 1896 national convention to expel the Cleveland branch for contravening the SLP's constitutional provision against electoral cooperation with other parties. He failed, however, to move the delegates to take such action, and the Cleveland comrades remained a thorn in his flesh for two more years.<sup>12</sup> Another matter on which the Party editor was somewhat less than omnipotent concerned the presence of immediate demands in the SLP platform,<sup>13</sup> which were kept there until 1900 despite DeLeon's opposition to them.<sup>14</sup> Even as late as 1908, after successive splits, defections, and expulsions had removed most of the anti-DeLeon sentiment from the Party, leaving it more completely under his influence than ever before, he was unable to prevent a number of Party members from organizing a dual, "Detroit" IWW, following the DeLeonites' departure from the original, Chicago-based union.<sup>15</sup>

While he could have answered his critics by citing such instances, DeLeon elected instead to maintain that no meaningful distinction could be drawn between himself and the Party as a whole; that he was merely the instrument of a collective Party will; and that therefore his antagonists were really attacking the Party. As he saw it, "somehow or other, the adversaries of the Socialist Labor Party have incarnated in me my Party's virtues," and that as a result, "the only conclusion to be arrived at is that the outcry against the National Editor is but a pretence; that what they really object to is the Party's principles, its tactics and its thorough discipline." Along the same lines he complained

to an interviewer from outside the labor movement that the press had developed the unfortunate habit of using his name whenever it referred to the SLP; on the contrary, he protested, "our whole institution gives the lie to anything like one man power. We don't want it, and couldn't have it if we did."<sup>16</sup>

Nor did DeLeon take this defensive tack only when he was being assailed as an autocrat. He tended to gather the Party mantle about him to fend off any adverse comments directed at him personally. For example, DeLeon at one point formally petitioned the Party to take disciplinary action against a member who was allegedly spreading malicious gossip about him. He declared that the defamation was an "injury not of myself only, but of the Party itself," for the slanderer's "real purpose" was "to injure the Party and its propaganda by throwing discredit upon one of its agitators." He averred that: "This slander against my good name has not been brought upon me by any private act of mine. The wounds that the slander has inflicted, and continues to inflict, are earned by me in the camp of the Party, owing to my activity in the Party's work." And he beseeched the Party to defend "those of its own members who, by reason of the work imposed on them, are exposed to the poisonous arrows of an infamous foe."<sup>17</sup>

Given DeLeon's perception of the movement not only as the germ of the future socialist commonwealth, but as a refuge in the here-and-now for the individual isolated in a hostile world, it was reasonable that he would repair to the Party for protection. Inherent in the idea of community was the communal obligation to defend members against injustice; to the extent that a community failed to meet that obligation, its viability would diminish. That DeLeon viewed the matter in this light was revealed in a letter he wrote to a Party member in Massachusetts, the editor of a labor paper in whose pages DeLeon had been personally maligned:

Do you father that slur upon our New York comrades and upon me personally? We have to be extremely jealous of one another's clean repute; he who is unfit should be cast off; the enemy will sufficiently malign us; if we don't protect one another's character against unjust aspersions, who will? And in that case the Party is 'busted.' It will break up in a wrangle of fishwives . . . I have made up my mind that this shall end if Party discipline and Party decency can bring it about; if not, the Party is not fit for a decent man to join, let alone give his time to. The organization where

one's character is not safe and in which one's fellow workers will not chivalrously stand by one another unless convicted is not worthy of the devotion without which no organization can succeed, but is bound to sink into the mire.<sup>18</sup>

The need for such solidarity was dictated by the perilously isolated position the Party itself was believed to hold as the exposed salient of a civilization whose time was yet to come, against which the adversary minions of the inhospitable present would be brought to bear in ever-increasing intensity. DeLeon outlined what he considered the difficult circumstances under which the Party had to operate:

An organization, holding so correct and, consequently, aggressive a position as that of the Socialist Labor Party . . . cannot choose but be the object of deep plots periodically sprung against its existence. Nor can those of its members—whose unterrorized steadfastness is taintable neither by blandishments, nor threats, nor yet by the lure of a place on some millionaire's pension list—choose but to draw upon themselves the poisoned arrows of defamation. It goes without saying that an organization which holds such a post of danger must be periodically convulsed by intrigues started from without . . . Such, indeed, has been the experience of the Socialist Labor Party . . . Its mere existence is a rebuke under which its foes writhe.

Threats to the Party could, in fact, issue from any quarter. Socialists, DeLeon warned, had to be wary even of apparently sympathetic upper-class dilettantes, since they were likely to "desert the Movement at the hour of danger" and worse, "act as entering wedges for others of their class whose only motive is treason."<sup>19</sup>

DeLeon's sense of the Party as an organization compelled by its unique historic role to negotiate forbidding political terrain was expressed in the figurative language he used to describe what a revolutionary party must be and what it must be able to do. A metaphor he deemed particularly apt for the SLP was that of a military formation, an army. The military unit, too, had to be prepared to meet an enemy in mortal combat and often to traverse a no-man's-land fraught with danger to reach its objective. Consequently, its effectiveness depended upon its fostering in its members a high degree of internal solidarity founded upon established patterns of cooperation, clear lines of authority, close comradeship, and a pervading esprit de corps. Applying

the analogy, DeLeon envisioned the workers as an army, with the Socialist Labor Party leading the march, "the intrepid Socialist organization" having "earned their love, their respect, their confidence." He remarked: "As in the storming of fortresses, the thing depends upon the head of the column—upon that minority that is so intense in its convictions, so soundly based on its principles, so determined in its action, that it carries the masses with it, storms the breastworks and captures the fort. Such a head of the column must be our Socialist organization to the whole column of the American proletariat."<sup>20</sup> However, until the proletarian force could be fully mobilized for that decisive assault, the shock troops of the SLP would have to do garrison duty, vigilant against the incursions of foes seeking to scatter the toilers' army in its infancy by such tactics as slandering the Party editor.<sup>21</sup>

In DeLeon's thoughts the military paradigm was accompanied by a maritime one. In this formulation, the revolutionary organization corresponded to a ship; the membership, to its mutually interdependent crew; and a treacherous sea, resembling the SLP's political environment, had to be navigated. On the sea, DeLeon suggested, a successful voyage depended upon good seamanship, which in turn presupposed a crew uniformly cognizant of the potential hazards and thus united in a common endeavor. Transferred to the political realm, the lesson was: "Load your revolutionary ship with the proper lading of science; hold her strictly to the load-star; try no monkeyshines and no dillyings and dallings with anything that is not strictly scientific, or with any man who does not stand on our uncompromisingly scientific platform . . . Not unless you do that, will you be safe, or can you prevail." To do otherwise, he elsewhere argued, gave the class enemy the opportunity "to steer the Movement into the breakers."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, through appeals and constant reiteration, through hectoring and badgering, and when they failed, through Party disciplinary action, DeLeon molded the Party to his specifications and was pleased with what he had wrought. Under his tutelage, it came to exhibit "approved indestructability" [*sic*] and "impregnable correctness." He could eventually declare, with evident pride, that: "Party divisions within the S.L.P. end at the frontier. When you see such divisions carried beyond the Party frontier, you are not dealing with an S.L.P. man."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, in a letter to a comrade, he compared his creation to "the Capitoline Hill, which alone, of all Rome, escaped the Gallic in-

vasion, and from which the invaders were finally driven back, never again to appear in Italy except as captives."<sup>24</sup>

Convinced that a tight, organic quality was essential for the movement in the present, DeLeon also asserted that it was a requisite for the ultimate success of socialism. As he stated it: "The Socialist Labor Party cannot, in our country, fulfill its mission—here less than anywhere else—. . . without . . . earn[ing] for it[self] the unqualified confidence of the now eagerly onlooking masses both in its integrity of purpose and its capacity to enforce order. It is only thus that we can hope to rekindle the now low-burning spark of manhood and womanhood in our American working class." "Not the heterogeneity of a Japanese quilt," he subsequently reminded his followers, "but, in fundamentals, the homogeneity that insures unity of action can alone insure permanence to a party of Socialism."<sup>25</sup>

Homogeneity and unity of action in the DeLeonite model of party organization were to be secured and preserved by obliging each member to recognize unqualifiedly the supreme authority of the Party as a body to set policy and define principles: once a line was adopted, all were bound to support and defend it. About the proper relationship of the socialist to the revolutionary organization, DeLeon theorized:

The modern revolutionist knows full well that man is not superior to principle, that principle is superior to man, but he does not fly off the handle with the maxim, and thus turn the maxim into absurdity. He firmly couples the maxim with this other that no principle is superior to the movement or organization that puts it and upholds it in the field . . . He knows that in the revolution demanded by our age, Organization must be the incarnation of Principle . . . the revolutionist will not make a distinction between the Organization and the Principle. He will say: 'The Principle and the Organization are one.'<sup>26</sup>

And since principle was superior to man, and the organization was principle incarnate, it followed that the individual revolutionist was to draw his ideological sustenance only from the Party. "The vagabond freedom of individual minds," said DeLeon, "however much they may strain progressward, destroy that order without which there can be no oneness of action, hence no results."<sup>27</sup> The duties imposed on SLP members by the Party constitution legislated at the 1904 national convention showed how, in practical terms, the door to heterodoxy and



intellectual adventurousness would be barred: no Party member was to be allowed to take courses in economics outside the Party except as part of a formal course of study leading to a diploma, degree, or certificate; no one was permitted to attend study classes of other political organizations; and people in attendance at SLP study groups were not to advocate positions varying from those approved by the Party. Evidently, strictures of this kind effectively stifled any of the "vagabond freedom of individual minds" that may have remained in Party ranks after bolder dissenting spirits had been driven out or had left of their own accord. Solon DeLeon, for one, after reflecting on his tenure of several years in pivotal Section New York, could not "recall any time when any question of large scale party policy was discussed [critically] by the membership."<sup>28</sup>

The central place occupied by doctrinal uniformity in DeLeon's scheme of things was a major reason for the importance he attached to the Party's literature, particularly its press. The SLP newspaper was the movement's primary medium of communication, and, as far as DeLeon was concerned, it was to be utilized to provide the rank and file with the correct theoretical guidance and to inform other readers, including potential recruits, of exactly where the movement stood. When DeLeon first assumed the editorship of the *People*, he took the helm of a paper whose pages had hitherto been filled with "boiler plate"—trivial entertainment fare such as articles on how to tie fishing flies, children's games and puzzles, and serialized fiction. This format being completely unsuited to his purposes, he immediately began the task of transforming the paper into a theoretically oriented publication with a serious news content. He operated on the principle that a socialist press "must furnish a specialized kind of news . . .—legitimate, labor and social news . . . supplemented by an editorial policy that illustrates Socialist principles by the light of the events of the day."<sup>29</sup>

With the press now supposedly serving as the veritable fount of Marxist thought, it was inevitable that the ideological controversies that raged within the Party during the 1890s, culminating in the large split-off of the "Kangeroo" faction at the end of the decade, would eventually come to revolve around the actual control and ownership of SLP publications. The Party had initially had its various papers produced and sold by the Socialistic Co-operative Publishing Association, a structurally distinct agency run by Party members; it also

designated as official organs some privately managed, ongoing publications espousing its viewpoint. These loose affiliations became problematic when discontent over the direction the Party was moving under DeLeon's spell crystallized in the separate publishing centers, where attempts were made to seize control of the papers.<sup>30</sup>

The challenge was not lost on DeLeon, who immediately led the Party in drawing its vital ideological artillery to safety within the redoubtable edifice he had built. Direct Party ownership and control of the press became doctrine, and it was henceforth held aloft as a hallmark of the Party's internal cohesion and soundness. Speaking some years after the massive rupture of 1899, DeLeon celebrated the integral relationship of the SLP with its press as "a magnificent monument of what organized well-developed class-consciousness can achieve."<sup>31</sup> He also observed with obvious satisfaction that "the Party press expresses [only] the collective view of the body. No impure and outside influences can affect it. The seed it scatters is sound and healthy." Never again would an opposition be allowed to build around any aspect of the Socialist Labor Party's publishing enterprise; even a "loyal opposition" group that simply questioned the wisdom of continuing daily publication of the *People* because of its enormous financial strain found itself subject to DeLeon's unforgiving wrath, its members either marked for expulsion or pressured to resign from the Party.<sup>32</sup>

Although DeLeon thought the ideological correctness of the rank and file was crucial, it formed only one part of his broader prescription for a solidly unified movement—"party discipline"—a term that had in his parlance a "twofold application." To be sure, the literature of the Party promoted "the discipline of obedience to facts, and obedience to the rules and regulations that the facts prescribe for the realization of the Socialist aim . . . This is the discipline of education. It is not, nor can it be, produced by Party legislation. It is the product of correct training. Necessary to it are unity of purpose, unity of method. The Socialist movement cannot be all things to all men; it can be only one thing, and to only one class—the working class." But the concept also implied "the power of the Party to visit with censure or expulsion as punishments, infractions or offenses against the Party's rules or principles . . . *Rigid adherence to Party principle and tactics being necessary to Socialist success, transgressions against the Party must be met with punishment according to the gravity of the offense.*" Lest his emphatic tone suggest that harsh authoritarianism lay at the core of

the notion, DeLeon justified this aspect of discipline in terms reminiscent of Rousseau's paradoxical ideal of civil freedom: "Membership in the Party being voluntary, and the discipline being self-imposed, he who subscribes to the Party's ethics does so, not as one yielding submission to imposed authority, but as one bowing to the necessity and desire of maintaining strict adherence to principle and for orderly government in Party affairs." "Discipline in this, its twofold application," he concluded, "is a recognition that knowledge is power and that in union there is strength." With discipline so defined, the responsibility of the SLP member was clear. "You will ever see the [true] revolutionist submit to the will of the majority," said DeLeon, and "you will always see him readiest to obey."<sup>33</sup>

DeLeon's stress on party discipline derived to some extent, too, from his perception of the Party as the germ of the socialist republic. No doubt influenced by Bellamy's picture of cooperative society, in *Looking Backward*, as a highly regimented phenomenon, he believed that it was only logical that discipline be the basis of social cohesion within the beachhead of the cooperative commonwealth represented by the Socialist Labor Party. Indeed, the very nature of the complex industrial society whose structure was to be revolutionized made discipline imperative for the revolutionary agent:

Our system of production is in the nature of an orchestra. No one man, no one town, no one State, can be said any longer to be independent of the other; the whole people of the United States, every individual therein, is dependent and interdependent upon all others. The nature of the machinery of production . . . [and] the subdivision of labor . . . compel a harmonious working together of all departments of labor, and thence compel the establishment of a Central Directing Authority, of an Orchestral Director, so to speak, of the orchestra of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Such is the State or Government that the Socialist revolution carries in its womb . . .

Socialism, accordingly, implies organization; organization implies directing authority; and the one and the other are strict reflections of the revolutions undergone by the tool of production.

It was, then, incumbent upon the individual soldier in the army of revolution to recognize "that the present machinery and methods of

production render impossible . . . the individual freedom of man such as our savage ancestors knew the thing; that, to-day, the highest individual freedom must go hand in hand with collective freedom; and none such is possible without a central directing authority."<sup>34</sup>

While a reckoning on the needs of the future prompted DeLeon's appeals for party discipline, the urgency with which he advanced the principle and his zealous pursuit of its punitive aspects indicate that DeLeon conceived of discipline more immediately as a cudgel to beat back forays against the homogeneous integrity of the Party, his harbor of refuge in the present.<sup>35</sup> He was no more willing to abide the indulgence of individual eccentricity in the class-consciously organized proletariat than he was individualism generally. "The Proletarian Revolution," he declaimed, "can know no 'tolerance,' because 'tolerance' in social dynamics spells 'inconsistence.' " He admonished: "If the S.L.P. does not keep its membership clean, it will become a collection of freaks and amount to nothing. The S.L.P. is not a parlor movement. It is only freaks that cry 'tolerance,' and, with the cry, sacrifice the substance to the shadow. He who sympathizes with anarchists must fight with the S.L.P. . . . The S.L.P. sections must be watchful of the applicants for membership. None should be admitted who are weak, or have a [personal] grievance, or an axe to grind."<sup>36</sup> DeLeon advised his comrades to use freely the ultimate sanction of expulsion against such "weaklings"; he seemed attracted by the dramatic purgative quality of the exercise, for much the same reason, perhaps, that he was so taken with that quality in the Marxian theory of irrepressible class struggle: "If there must be amputation, do it nobly, but firmly. Remember the adage that the tender-handed surgeon makes stinging wounds, and lengthens the period of suffering and pain. The surgeon that has a firm hand to push the knife as deep as it ought to go, and pulls it out, and lets the pus flow out, that surgeon makes clean wounds, shortens pain, brings cure quickly about."<sup>37</sup> Not only did the internal health of the Socialist Labor Party require the ready wielding of the disciplinary scalpel, according to DeLeon, but its growth, too, would rely on it. He implored the Party to:

Never forget that every incident that takes place within your, within our, ranks is noted by a large number of workers on the outside. Tamper with discipline, allow this member to do as he likes, that member to slap the party constitution in the face, yonder member to fuse with reformers, this other to forget the nature

of the class struggle and to act up to his forgetfulness—allow that, keep such ‘reformers’ in your ranks and you have stabbed your movement at its vitals. With malice toward none, with charity to all, you must enforce discipline if you mean to reorganize to a purpose.<sup>38</sup>

It was from the vantage of his fortress party, his “Capitoline Hill,” that DeLeon surveyed the other movements that strove to gain the allegiance of American workers. Measuring them against the standards he had set for the movement that would ride the crest of progress, he found them a sorry lot indeed and consequently capable of much mischief to the only legitimate entry in the field—the SLP. Bogus organizations only delayed the day of salvation by drawing workingmen off course with false teachings and demoralizing them with the confusion and evanescence born inevitably of a lack of strong internal discipline. Moreover, the presence on the scene of wrongly constituted alternatives to the SLP posed a real danger to the Party itself, since they tended to exert a magnetic force on the more fragile links in its maillike fabric, causing dissension and disarray. It followed, then, that such incubi on the proletariat would have to be fought unceasingly and without quarter.

For DeLeon, the most threatening of these movements were symptomatic of a more general evil—the *ignis fatuus* of “Reform,” the simple “change of externals,” a snare and a delusion that paled before the grander vistas illumined by “Revolution.” Clearly, his attitude on reform was colored by his own bitter disappointment with reform movements prior to enrolling in the SLP. They had proved, to DeLeon’s satisfaction, frail and futile in the face of the social problems they addressed. This he had found to be especially true of the Nationalist clubs, since his developing Marxist commitment at that time had made him especially prone to revulsion at the pursuit of half-measures. The Commonwealth Party affair, of course, was the final straw, to him an unmitigated debacle that justified writing off the Nationalist movement completely. Evidently, the stench of what DeLeon regarded as a betrayal was pungent enough to be well remembered; some six years later he remarked acidly that: “In New York a reformer cannot come within smelling distance of us but we can tell him. We know him; we have experienced him; we know what mischief he can do; and he cannot get within our ranks if we can help it.” And more than a decade afterward, the reappearance in New York municipal

politics of a polite reform coalition against Tammany Hall corruption prompted him to reiterate his original criticism of Commonwealth-style misadventures.<sup>39</sup>

But a palsied grasp on the fundamentals of social reality was to be expected, for the inherent shortcomings of reformist thinking were manifold. First, as DeLeon put it, "the reformer spurns organization; his symbol is 'Five Sore Fingers on a Hand'—far apart from one another." Hence: "The scatter-brained reformer is ruled by a centrifugal . . . force. Somebody has aptly said that in social movements an evil principle is like a scorpion; it carries the poison that kills it. So with the reformers; they carry the poison of disintegration that breaks them up into twos and ones, and thus deprives them in the end of all power for mischief."<sup>40</sup>

The shallow appreciation reformers had of the organizational requisites of social change was complemented by the intellectual poverty of their ideology. They were animated solely by "those malarial fevers that reformers love to dignify with the name of 'moral feelings,' " "habitually . . . satisfied with externals," "deceived with appearances," and "ever . . . found prevaricating and in perpetual [self-] contradiction," execrable flaws that were "a consequence of reform being sentimental and never reasoning from fundamental principles." In short, the reformer was no scientist; he was a charlatan, the fitting inheritor of a tradition of American charlatanism historically responsible for the depth of the working-class ignorance with which the modern socialist now had to contend. A creature of self-befuddlement, the reformer had also been a source of positive harm to the mind of the proletariat, rendering the work of the revolutionary all the more taxing:

One charlatan after another, who could speak glibly, and who could get money from this, that or the other political party, would go among the people and upon the tablets of the minds of the working classes he scribbled his crude text. So it happens that to-day, when the apostle of Socialism goes before our people, he cannot . . . take a pencil and draw upon the minds of his hearers the letters of science; no, he must first clutch a sponge, a stout one, and wipe clean the pot-hooks that the charlatans have left there. Not until he has done that can he begin to preach and teach successfully.<sup>41</sup>

A stock-in-trade of the charlatan, the "pot-hook" most in need of

being scrubbed away, was the "palliative," which, it will be remembered, had been the key element in the gradualist philosophy of the Nationalists, their forces separately engaged in a scatter of one-issue reform campaigns on the assumption that quantitative change would eventuate in qualitative change. As DeLeon perceived it, however, "the same hand that reaches out the 'palliative' to the *wronged*, reaches out the 'palliation' to the *wrong*." Elucidating the point he insisted that: "The two acts are inseparable. The latter is an inevitable consequence of the former. Request a little, when you have a right to the whole, and your request, whatever declamatory rhetoric or abstract scientific verbiage it be accompanied with, works a subscription to the principle that wrongs you." More often than not, he observed, the palliative as a remedy is "wholly visionary," and despite the adequacy of the immediate relief it might tender in a given instance, it "ever steels the wrong that is palliated." He further maintained that "the palliative works the evil of inoculating the Revolutionary Force with a fundamental misconception of the nature of the foe it has to deal with," because the fruitless quest for palliatives "proceeds from the theory that the Capitalist Class will allow itself to be 'pared off' to death," in his view, a "fatal illusion." Hence, DeLeon opined, "Nothing is gained on the road of palliatives" while "all may be lost."<sup>42</sup>

To the charlatan's chronic tunnel-vision perception of injustice, which gave rise to the puny solution of palliatives, DeLeon counterposed the rigor and comprehensive scope of Marxian science, advancing the principle that: "At revolutionary periods the blinking at one Wrong extenuates the Wrong protested against: it is a feature of revolutionary periods that kindred Wrongs, all the Wrongs rooted in the central Wrong that the revolution is up in arms against, are blended into one, and are jointly attacked." For, "Where the thing to be secured is part of an organic whole, . . . the one-thing-at-a-time theory is an optic illusion." This analysis informed DeLeon's struggle against reform's fifth column within his Socialist Labor Party bastion: immediate demands. To him, they bespoke the ideological crudity, the scientific immaturity, pervading the reform charlatan's medicine show, as was shown graphically in one reference he made to immediate demands as a "navel-string" that "the true political party of Socialism" would not have "dragging behind it." "A movement must," he contended, "be perfectly sound, and scientifically based or it cannot stand," because "a falsely based movement is like a lie, and a lie can-

not survive." Immediate demands, therefore, imperiled the SLP's survival: they were "nonsense," "untrue," and implied "a state of things that is not to be accomplished."<sup>43</sup> They damaged the Party by obscuring what was to be accomplished, thereby tending to divert it from its real objective as expressed in its one legitimate demand—socialism: "The moment things that are not in the nature of . . . [the revolutionary] 'demand,' because they are not the goal, are raised to the dignity of a 'demand,' they are apt to be, and generally are, confused with the goal itself. A political party that sets up 'immediate' demands by so much blurs its 'constant' demand, or goal." After all, as DeLeon succinctly put it, "The program of revolution is revolution." "Palliatives" being just "props to that which the revolution intends to overthrow," he reasoned, "No such prop can be within the contemplation, or form part of the program of Socialism." Moreover, even if immediate demands were pressed successfully, their realization would only serve to "sweet-scent the capitalist rule," an exercise akin to "washing the garbage before dumping it into the can."<sup>44</sup>

The intensity with which DeLeon waged his campaign against reformism in the SLP issued, too, from a deep-seated conviction that reform bore not only the mark of charlatanism and the resulting one of fruitlessness, but, more ominously, the indelible stain of disaster—a conviction again probably originating in his ruminations on the disintegration of the United Labor Party and the Nationalist movement. To avert the catastrophe that he believed reform drew in its train was obviously the purpose of several of his verbal assaults on the heresy. It was certainly the underlying motive for his translation of Lassalle's *Franz von Sickingen*, a drama that told, through five acts, the story of a social movement undone by cowardice and dishonesty, two traits DeLeon frequently associated with reform. It also inspired the second segment of his two-part address, *Two Pages from Roman History*, wherein the foundering of the ancients on the shoals of reform received detailed scrutiny under the heading, "The Warning of the Gracchi," while a recapitulation in another lecture of the unhappy fate of Wat Tyler's rebellion at the hands of Richard II posted the same warning.<sup>45</sup> DeLeon felt the message was a particularly important one to convey to the working class, because "the characteristic weakness of the proletariat renders it prone to lures."

It, the least favored of all historic revolutionary classes, is called upon to carry out a revolution that is pivoted upon the most com-



plicated synthesis, and one withal that is easiest to be obscured by the dust that its very foe, the Capitalist Class, is able to raise most plentifully. The essence of this revolution—the overthrow of Wage Slavery—cannot be too forcefully held up. Nor can the point be too forcefully kept in evidence that, short of the abolition of Wage Slavery, all ‘improvements’ either accrue to Capitalism, or are the merest moonshine where they are not sidetracks.

“Improvements” were simply “so many lures to allow the revolutionary heat to radiate into vacancy”; they presented “opportunities for the usurper to prosecute his own usurpatory purposes under the guise, aye, with the aid and plaudits of his victims, who imagine they are commanding, he obeying their bidding.” And “where a Social Revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not enforced,” DeLeon cautioned, “REACTION is the alternative.” Thus, he held that “false radicalism breeds reaction,” and that, consequently, “every reform granted by capitalism” should be interpreted as “a concealed measure of reaction.”<sup>46</sup>

In addition to serving capital as a shield against “revolutionary heat,” reform materially aided the potential perpetrators of reaction in the sense that the repeated failure of movements founded upon it abased and demoralized the workers, leaving them easy prey for their class enemy. For this, DeLeon arraigned the charlatans, who, “one after the other, set up movements that proceeded upon lines of ignorance; movements that were denials of scientific facts; movements that bred hopes in the hearts of the people; yet movements that had to collapse.” When they did collapse, “the result,” according to him, could be measured in “disappointment, stagnation, diffidence, hopelessness in the masses.” Reform bodies had “confused the judgment of our people, weakened the spring of their hope, and abashed their courage. Hence the existing popular apathy in the midst of popular misery; hence despondency despite unequalled opportunities for redress; hence the backwardness of the [socialist] movement here when compared with that of Europe.”<sup>47</sup>

Precisely because reform was “invariably a cat’s paw for dupers” in the ruling class, and because charlatan organizations had left the workers dispirited and vulnerable, DeLeon thought it imperative to call attention to the sinister import of palliatives emanating from the Democratic and Republican Parties, the two wings of the party of property in the United States. To do otherwise, to countenance or, worse

yet, advocate reform, he asserted, "only helps to prepare the workers as voting cattle for capitalism, when capitalist parties, . . . by taking up . . . [reform] demands, promise their immediate realization." The danger DeLeon saw in playing reform one-upmanship with the capitalist parties lay in the fact that one "can always be out-sopped."<sup>48</sup> This he illustrated in a 1902 speech by citing the productive use to which the supposedly "socialistic" demand for municipal ownership of public utilities<sup>49</sup> had been put by capitalist politicians in a Chicago election that year. While some had hailed it as evidence that "socialism" was making progress, DeLeon found "no cause for joy in the phenomenon." The high vote total rolled up by the proposal, on the contrary, signified to him "vast chunks of Socialist education left unattended to; vast masses left so untutored as to be caught by fly-paper."<sup>50</sup>

With reform shown to be noxious on so many counts, the very idea of fusion or cooperation with bourgeois reform groups was anathema to DeLeon. The seeming community of interest that would give rise to such a possibility was, as far he was concerned, but a temporary, anomalous coincidence flowing from the protean eddy of the "Social Question," not the substance of genuine affinity. Fusion itself, his personal experience told him, was a quintessentially reformist solution, based on the fallacy that compromise was an option, that opposing class interests could be reconciled and subordinated to a common end. Using an analogy from Darwinian biology for a purpose that would have surprised William Graham Sumner, DeLeon endeavored to dispose of the notion:

Struggle, and not piping peace; assimilation by the ruthless process of the expulsion of all elements that are not fit for assimilation, and not external coalition—such are the laws of growth in biology, and such are and needs must be the laws of growth in sociology.

Hence, Socialism recognizes in modern society the existence of a struggle of classes, and the line that divides the combatants to be the economic line that separates the interests of the property-holding capitalist class from the interests of the propertiless class of the proletariat. As a final result of this, Socialism, with the Nazarene, spurns as futile, if not wicked, the method of cajolery and seduction, or the crying of 'Peace, peace, where there is no peace,' and cuts a clean swath, while reform is eternally entangled in its course of charming, luring, decoying.

Indeed, the coalition tendency in reform, its "lean[ing] upon others," was what insured "its downfall."<sup>51</sup> It would, said DeLeon, spell doom for the revolutionary movement too, because "fusion always implies abandonment of principle," and "the necessity to carve a path for bourgeois demands cannot choose but dull the edge of the Socialist sword."<sup>52</sup> Consequently, he contended that: "So long as a Proletarian Movement seeks for 'alliances abroad,' it demonstrates that it has not yet got its 'sea legs.' Any such move or measure can only deprive it of whatever chance it had to develop and acquire them. The Proletarian Revolution is self-reliant. It is sufficient unto itself."<sup>53</sup>

Convinced that "alliances abroad" constituted a serious error, one rooted in the cretinous mentality of bourgeois reform, DeLeon led a continuing jihad within his party against fusion sentiment and the hydra-headed reform evil that nourished it, wherever they were discovered to lurk. With his encouragement and through his direct intervention, a number of prominent Party figures were cast out during the nineties for reformism and fusionism, and by 1904, the Party constitution expressly proscribed compromise with, and endorsement of or by, other political organizations.<sup>54</sup> Presumably, before the nucleus of the proletarian army could effectively carry the fight to the enemy, its rear had to be secured. It had to purge itself of the debilitating reform bacillus, if necessary by excising its infected parts, plunging "the knife," in DeLeon's above-quoted phrase, "as deep as it ought to go."

Driving reform spirit from the Party was complemented by the unremitting attack DeLeon pressed specifically against its main institutional manifestations, especially those he conceived to be the Socialist Labor Party's most significant competitors for the workingman's loyalty. His offensive against other movements took shape along the lines of the general indictment he had drawn up with an eye on the frustrations of the past. The battle now continued, only the names of the adversaries having changed.

On the economic field, the American Federation of Labor loomed throughout DeLeon's career as the chief embodiment of the reform disposition and was, accordingly, a principal target of his scorn and ridicule. The sentiment was fully reciprocated by Samuel Gompers, who, as AFL President during these years, personified the federation and its style of unionism every bit as much as DeLeon personified the SLP. The federation was founded under Gompers' leadership in 1886. Its appearance heralded a trend among skilled workers away from the politically oriented radical and reform traditions of organized labor.

Rather than endeavoring to alter fundamentally the status of the working class as a whole, the AFL established as its principal mission the protection and expansion of the rights and privileges of its members within the prevailing system of class relations. This meant striving for employer recognition, negotiated contracts, guaranteed wage rates, and acceptable working conditions. Nevertheless, socialists were active in the federation, and they became embroiled in a controversy with Gompers in 1890 over whether the socialist-dominated New York Central Labor Federation was entitled to an AFL charter. Gompers refused to grant the charter on the grounds that a section of the Socialist Labor Party held membership in the CLF, a direct violation, in his view, of the AFL constitution's proscription of political party representation. The dispute climaxed at the AFL convention, when the CLF delegation was denied credentials and the convention upheld the action of the credentials committee after an angry floor fight. While socialists continued to participate as trade-unionists in the work of the AFL, the organization's unwillingness to distinguish between capitalist parties and what they saw as their bona fide proletarian party embittered relations between organized labor and organized socialism.

Though DeLeon had not been directly involved in the struggle, in its aftermath he quickly emerged as Gompers' principal socialist antagonist. The debate between the two became quite bitter and frequently descended to the personal, as indicated by Gompers' sour reflections, in the presence of garment workers' leader Benjamin Stolberg, on DeLeon's mysterious ancestry. Gompers offered that: "DeLeon came of a Venezuelan family of Spanish and Dutch Jewish descent with a strain of colored blood. That makes him a first-class son of a bitch." For his part, DeLeon liberally used terms such as "treachery," "impotency," "futility," "scabbery," and "bribery" when holding forth on "Gompersism" or "Gompers unionism."<sup>55</sup> Without multiplying the examples, undeniably there was no love lost between the two men and their respective followings.

Fueling DeLeon's hostility toward the AFL was the stubbornly motionless cloud of failure that he believed hung over it. And in that specter of defeat he read the familiar signature of the charlatan's cavalcade to oblivion. Consequently, in an 1896 review of the federation's record, he remarked: "Like causes brought on like results, false foundations brought on ruin and failure. Strike upon strike proved dis-

astrous in all concentrated industries; wages and the standard of living of the working class at large went down; [and] the unemployed multiplied." The "false foundations" were the AFL's typically reformist denial of the class struggle, which underlay the federation's "pure-and-simple" approach, its willingness to treat and make peace with the capitalist foe, and its refusal to see that a true solution to the problems of the workingman could only be achieved through a politics oriented to the reality of irrepressible conflict. " 'Pure and simpledom,' " he charged, "neglects the drilling in class-consciousness, aye, prevents it." "The unions," he was reported on another occasion to have said, "were bound to deviate from their road towards emancipation on account of [the] erroneous conception of their real character as a class, a conception taken over from the parlance of the bourgeoisie, imbued with the ideas and ideals of the bourgeois class and its vulgar-economists." As a result, "What the capitalist class seeks, the pure and simple union seeks also. But what the former seeks class-consciously, and, therefore, intelligently, the latter seeks class-unconsciously, and, therefore, as a caricature of the former." Its theoretical underpinnings thoroughly polluted with bourgeois fallacy, the Gompers brand of labor organization was thus held to be a frail reed at best, nearly worthless. As DeLeon put it:

Even accepting . . . the most favorable summary possible of the work of pure and simpledom, it would follow that pure and simpledom is, at best, a brake to check the downward run of the chariot of labor; it would follow that pure and simpledom not only is utterly incompetent to emancipate the working class, but that it is not even able to prevent decline; that all there is in it is the capacity to slacken or reduce the downward trend of things. Even accepting this most favorable of views, it would be an argument to cast the thing aside.<sup>56</sup>

He placed the onus for this fatal incapacity of the trade-union movement on its leadership, on the mendacity and perfidy of Gompers and his cohorts, "that combination of ignoramuses, ripened into reprobates—the labor fakir who seeks to coin the helplessness of the proletariat into cash for himself." However, in keeping with the more general, Marx-influenced, sociologic scope of his analysis, DeLeon did not locate the source of the moral depravity in the "fakirs" themselves, but rather in the theory-deficient context in which pure-and-simple unionism had developed. He explained:

There is no difference between what is called the corruption in the unions and what is noticed in shipwrecks when men become cannibals. I cannot now think of any of the numerous corrupt labor leaders . . . who did not start honest enough. But coupled to his honesty was IGNORANCE . . . He failed, of course. He then imputed the failure to inevitableness. The capitalist helped him along. He lost all hope in the working class. He then decided to feather his own nest. Friendly relations between him and capitalist thought followed inevitably, and he became what Mark Hanna so well called him—the labor lieutenant of the capitalist class.

When this stage in the fakir's career had been reached, DeLeon pointed out, the original accident of ignorance had to be perpetuated among the rank and file in order for him to preserve his privileged position. And an unenlightened body of workers, one oblivious to the class struggle and thus "imagin[ing] that the interests of the capitalist class and the interests of the working class are one and the same—such an organization and such workingmen are simply appendages to the capitalist class, and will be drawn into the vortex of competing capitalist conflicts."<sup>57</sup>

DeLeon noted several ways in which the pure-and-simple union functioned as a pawn on the capitalist chessboard. Ignorance, for one thing, permitted a malfeasant leader to "engineer strikes in favor of one competing capitalist against another" and to "act as an agent of the stock exchange[,] starting strikes to lower stock, or keeping up strikes to favor competing concerns." Machinations of this sort also extended to the political field. These were highlighted by the fact, as DeLeon phrased it, that "the Trades Union can not escape its political essence." Inevitably, exploitation in the shop prompted union men to raise questions pregnant with political import. The fakir leadership systematically and immediately squelched these questions, under the guise of a policy of apoliticalism—the bedrock of their "pure-and-simple" self-designation. The inquiring worker, DeLeon averred, "need not mention the word 'politics'; he need not breathe the word 'party'; he need not even whisper the word 'Socialism.'" His utterance of economics that reflect the class struggle is all that is needed. The labor lieutenants of the Capitalist Class will jump up with the cry: 'No politics in the Union!' It is an instinctive act. No mouse scents the dreaded cat more unerringly."<sup>58</sup>

The lid firmly on potential trouble from the ranks, the pure-and-simple labor leader was free to engage in "dickers and deals with the bourgeois politicians," "split[ting] up [the workers] at the ballot box among the parties of capital, and thus unit[ing them] in upholding the system of capitalist exploitation." The transparent hypocrisy of "No politics in the Union!" hence produced the obscene irony of "the workers . . . [being] shot, clubbed, indicted, imprisoned by the identical Presidents, Governors, Mayors, Judges, etc.—Republican and Democratic—whom their misleaders had corruptly induced them to support." Proof positive that Gompers-style unionism was nothing more than a tool of capitalism could be found, to DeLeon's satisfaction, in its association after 1900 with the National Civic Federation, "an organization of capitalists," he informed the International in 1907, "the purpose of which is to establish 'harmonious relations between Labor and Capital.' "<sup>59</sup>

Because it was so devoid of class consciousness, said DeLeon, "A.F. of L. unionism has become a fraud on the word union. Etymologically it is false—[for] it disunites the working class." The lack of class solidarity he read in the very structure of the organization. Hence, no doubt with his tightly unified SLP in mind, DeLeon referred derisively to the AFL as "a tape-worm," to him a felicitous analogy, "because a tape-worm is no organism; it is an aggregation of links with no cohesive powers worth mentioning." DeLeon here alluded to the fact that the federation was a decentralized, loosely connected body of largely autonomous craft unions, its guiding principle being, as he termed it, "'Craft Sovereignty' " or, more negatively, "'Craft Vanity,' " "a sentiment, which, traced to its source," he affirmed, "is a denial of the oneness of proletarian interests." Such a structure, and the class-ignorant philosophy that it reflected, militated against the growth of that "essential accompaniment of class-consciousness" upon which DeLeon so strenuously insisted within the SLP: "the habit of self-enforced discipline." The ideal of collective discipline, self-imposed, being also the essential cohesive ingredient in his conception of the class-conscious proletarian community, it was not surprising that he would explain and illustrate the absence of discipline in the AFL in terms of its adverse consequences for the community potential of the Federation:

Being partly an organization built by the grace of the employer, often entirely so, the 'pure and simple' Union is essentially a compulsory affair. From this circumstance a number of others flow.

The most important one of all for the subject under consideration is that the membership in innumerable instances are held to the Union only by the bond of 'paying dues.' This being about all that is demanded of them, they either put in an appearance at the meetings only to pay the blackmail and then go away again, or they never come; an officer goes around where they work and collects the money . . . [Under the circumstances,] discipline . . . becomes a monstrous caricature, the abjectness of men tyrannized by the labor lieutenants of the Capitalist Class.

Without the discipline enjoined by a higher sense of purpose, the typical AFL union quickly degenerated into a feckless band of self-interested opportunists, functioning "merely [as] a jobs-securing machine" that "inevitably rends the working class in twain." In reports to the Socialist International, DeLeon scornfully enumerated the class-dividing mechanisms used by federation affiliates to "deliberately exclude members of their trade[s] so as to keep the shrinking jobs to themselves," citing stringent apprenticeship rules, exorbitant initiation fees, and high dues as the most glaring examples. He even attributed the demands of several pure-and-simple unions for war with Spain in the spring of 1898 solely to their desire "to deplete the labor market."<sup>60</sup>

However, in DeLeon's eyes, the ultimate expression of the pure-and-simple trade union's divisive influence on the proletariat was its readiness to perform the roles in a labor version of the Punch-and-Judy show at the behest and for the benefit of the employer, "earn[ing] its Judas pence . . . by allying itself with the employer each time that some other craft was at war with the employing class." Such, again, was the predictable outcome of ignorance. "A Trade Union that doesn't recognize the class struggle," he warned, "will find itself arrayed against other workingmen of different trades, sometimes of their own trade, according to the temporary interests of their employer." Blind to the true nature of the class nexus, the unions had absorbed the spurious bourgeois precept "that competition, and not co-operation, is the source of all human progress," although they should have realized that, in actuality, "competition amongst capitalists spells scabbing amongst workingmen."<sup>61</sup>

The heinous folly of union men scabbing on one another was facilitated by the AFL's reverence for another, related mainstay of the capitalist system, the sanctity of contract. This enabled the employer to divide his workers at will by the simple procedure of staggering the



expiration dates of the contracts of the several specialized craft unions that organized his work force, secure in the knowledge that, should a strike of one union occur at the conclusion of a contract period, its effect would be minimized by the continued labor of the others, who could be counted upon to honor their own existing agreements. DeLeon found the obeisance paid to the contract principle by federation leaders to be one of their more objectionable features, and he spared no sarcasm when characterizing the work of the fakirs in a typical wildcat strike situation:

They do not turn their attention to the men on strike; the contract-breaking miscreants are below the contempt of my virtuous labor lieutenant. They call around them the men in the other departments . . . and . . . address them in this language:

'Behold yonder sinks of iniquity! They have broken their contracts! It is a wonder the lightning of heaven does not come down and blast them. Surely the bones of the patriotic founders of this Republic are rattling in their graves at the discovery that there can be such lawless men encumbering this soil of freedom. Look at 'em! They broke their con-tracts! Surely you will not do the same? Surely you will not be so base! Surely *you* will be true!'

And the men thus addressed cross their arms over their manly chests, and bowing low to the Goddess of Contract, that has been conjured up before them for the occasion, make answer:

'Not we! *We* shall be loyal to our word. *We* shall respect our agreements. *We* shall not break our sacred contracts!'

Lest the point of his sardonic playlet be missed, DeLeon stressed: "It is a fact, deep with significance, . . . that it is not the *unorganized scab* who breaks strikes, but the *organized craft* that really does the dirty work; and thus each craft when itself involved in a strike fights heroically, when not involved demeans itself at arrant scabs; betrays its class—all in fatuous reverence to 'contracts!'" Indeed, the havoc wrought on class solidarity by capitalism's seduction of the AFL cut so deeply that unions scabbed upon one another often without even being aware of it. In support of this allegation, DeLeon in one speech recounted to his audience an episode in which even an injunction document issued against a striking union bore the union label. Evidence of this kind, to him illustrative of the depths to which AFL unionism had sunk, justified writing off the federation as irredeemable, as, in his words, "a ship, never seaworthy, but now stranded and captured by a

handful of pirates; a tape-worm pulled to pieces, . . . its career [having] only filled still fuller the workers' measure of disappointment, diffidence, helplessness."<sup>62</sup>

During the 1890s, the threat represented by the benighted AFL in the economic sphere had, in DeLeon's estimation, its political counterpart in Populism. The People's Party emerged out of the agrarian protest that shook the nation's South and Great Plains in those years. Small, independent farmers and their communities were plagued by tight credit, high transportation charges, land monopoly, low commodity prices, and associated ills that were making life based on the "yeoman" farmer ideal increasingly untenable. The discontent focalized politically in the People's Party and its Omaha Platform of 1892, containing a potpourri of reform demands directed against "the interests" and appealing for support from those deemed the farmer's fellow "producers," the urban working class. The onset of a depression in 1893, resulting in mounting unemployment and misery for the proletariat, served to give the Populists credibility among workers in several localities, and thriving Labor-Populist alliances developed, particularly in the Midwest. Socialists, too, flocked to join these coalitions, attracted by the collectivist thrust in their programs.<sup>63</sup> Included were a considerable number of SLP members who flouted their party's strictures against fusion. The Party disciplinary apparatus felt compelled to respond by suspending, in some cases, entire sections of these heretics.<sup>64</sup>

DeLeon announced himself against the new movement quite early, after one of its preliminary organizational conferences had met in Cincinnati in the spring of 1891. No doubt his suspicions were aroused by the prominent part played by Nationalists during the initial stages, suspicions that were confirmed when the Bellamyites figured subsequently as a key element in the small Eastern Populist contingent centered in New York and Massachusetts.<sup>65</sup> The Bellamyite albatross indicated to him that another edition of the perennial reform vehicle, the socially heterogeneous common front with all that it implied, was sprouting from the historic mire of charlatanism. Albeit clothed in rural garb, the shape of the thing seemed all too familiar: a movement professing friendship for labor, but in fact anchoring itself to the interests of an antithetical class; one affecting social radicalism, but in reality harboring reaction.

Populism, as DeLeon analyzed it, was fundamentally a middle-class affair, and hence a political formation in which the proletariat could not participate to advantage. He outlined the social basis of Populism thus:

The[e] middle class finds itself ground between the upper millstone of the large capitalists and the nether millstone of the workingmen. The workingman wants to have higher wages; . . . he wants to have more of what he produces. But the middle class finds that in proportion as the workingmen demand this, on the one hand, the middle class is driven back, on the other, by the large capitalists whose tools of production enable them to produce so much more cheaply, and then there develops a special middle class economics. Hence . . . the present movement of the small farmers.

As his millstone image suggests, DeLeon reckoned that the petit-bourgeoisie was an obsolete class, doomed to extinction by the merciless progress of the forces of production. He argued that it "still lives in the days of the American Revolution, when the Revolutionists were necessarily individual producers with small tools and small private ownership; a class which to-day holds there a position that is against the progress of civilization. That class today is pure sediment and in the clash of the revolution that is to take place it will be wiped out as mist is wiped out by the sun."<sup>66</sup>

Its vision riveted to the past, the middle class obstinately refused to recognize whither America was moving. In order for the truth to dawn on it, DeLeon quipped, the "middle class will have to be sold at auction by the sheriff. That alone will enlighten it as a class. When it has lost its property . . . and its members have themselves become wage slaves, then it will see." In the meantime, through Populism, it "aim[ed] at the impossible achievement of preserving the system of small production." While the petit-bourgeois party "uttered grandiloquent and unmeaning phrases on behalf of the wage workers, it talked very concrete language on behalf of the small producers, farmers especially, whose limited acreage and capital rendered them unequal to the competitive struggle." This the proletariat had to be aware of when the Populists talked of alliances on the specious ground of "producer" unity, for "the present struggle . . . is not between WHAT IS and WHAT WAS: it is between WHAT IS and WHAT WILL BE."<sup>67</sup>

Seeking to discredit Populism in the eyes of the working class, DeLeon dissected some of the more prominent features of its program in speeches, debates, and editorials, his objective being to demonstrate specifically how these proposals, would, contrary to the claims put forward for them, militate against the best interests of the wage earner if enacted. The conflict between appearance and substance in the planks of the People's Party platform DeLeon ascribed to the malady he held to be common to all reform ventures, an absence of scientific rigor. His attitude on Populism's intellectual qualities was revealed clearly years later in a journalistic set-to with Tom Watson, who, during the agrarian insurgency's heyday, was its best-known Southern leader. DeLeon, in one of his editorial scoldings, declared that the source of Watson's confusion on the particular subject at issue was "one of the inevitable results of the mental training imparted by the philosophy of  $2 + 2 = 16$  to 1." He continued: "A system of thought that, from shallow premises, flies off to the scatterbrained financial theory of which Mr. Watson is an expositor, miseducates. If indulged in intensely, it disqualifies the mind for that conscientious reading and sober thought that renders a man responsible for his words." And such endemically faulty reasoning, DeLeon suggested, provided the scaffold from which emanated Populism's siren song to the unwary toiler. He adduced the Populist demand for nationalization of the railroads as a case in point. This was a popular aspiration among radical workers; indeed it was also a measure advocated in the SLP platform. Hence, with seeming logic, the Populists entreated class-conscious workers and socialists to join with them to reach a mutually desired goal. Beneath the apparent community of interest, however, DeLeon located a fundamental disharmony. The same end, to be sure, was being pursued in this instance by both Populists and class-conscious workingmen, but for very different and inherently irreconcilable reasons. The reason the Populists favored a nationalized transportation system stemmed from their middle-class derivation. As DeLeon put it:

The standpoint from which they [the Populists] proceed is that of middle class interests as against the interests of the upper capitalists or monopolists. The railroad monopolists are now fleeing the middle class; these want to turn the tables upon their exploiters; they want to abolish them, wipe them out, and appropriate unto themselves the fleecings of the working class which the rail-

road monopolists now monopolize. With this reactionary class interest in mind the duper—Populist—steps forward and holds this plausible language:

'We, too, want the nationalization of the roads; we are going your way; join us!'

The class-conscious worker, therefore, had to reply in the negative. He would, DeLeon stated, repudiate the offer of cooperation, objecting: " 'You . . . [may] want to nationalize the railroads, but only as a reform; we want nationalization as a revolution. You do not propose, while we are fixedly determined, to relieve the railroad workers of the yoke of wage slavery under which they now grunt and sweat.' " He would, in this manner, demonstrate his awareness of the truth that "there is no exploiter like the middle class exploiter" and that "the middle class . . . is the worst, the bitterest, the most inveterate, the most relentless exploiter of the wage slave."<sup>68</sup>

Informed by the conviction that Populism consisted of nothing more than the death throes of a spent petit-bourgeoisie, DeLeon zeroed in on the demand that to him most strikingly illustrated that perception of the movement—the free coinage of silver. No issue underscored more definitely the conflicting needs, respectively, of the working and middle classes. While the primary impetus behind the silver agitation, according to DeLeon, was "the silver mine barons," he remarked that the middle class, "for the purpose of somewhat improving its condition . . . is ready to fight the battle of the plutocracy of silver, notwithstanding it pretends to fight the battle of the workers against plutocracy." The introduction of silver money would improve the condition of the petit-bourgeois freeholder, he reasoned, by inflating the currency, permitting debts to be repaid with cheap money and at the same time forcing a rise in the price of agricultural commodities. Possessing, therefore, more money, the farmer would be able to purchase machinery that would enhance the efficiency of his operation and allow him to strengthen his competitive position in the market. For the worker, though, DeLeon insisted, free coinage would bring only grief. Higher prices for foodstuffs and raw materials from the wage worker's point of view translated into a decline in real wages. Hence, to the Populist assertion that free silver would enlarge the per capita circulating income, DeLeon retorted by posing the question of "how the workingman was to get the money to spend," a subject Peo-

ple's Party orators increasingly glossed over or ignored. Moreover, the greater efficiency on small farms resulting from the acquisition of labor-saving equipment, he contended, would displace farm hands, who in turn would have to seek work in the cities, swelling the urban labor supply and driving wage rates down even further. Silver, then, belied the People's Party's prolabor image. If workers were, despite this, to back the Populists and insure their election, DeLeon envisioned how the spoils of victory would be divided: "Populist farmers are to get free silver at 16 to 1, so that they may pay their debts with depreciated money and thus become capitalists; the Populist politicians will get the spoils of office, while the Populist wage workers will mop their foreheads and rub their empty stomachs with a glittering generality."<sup>69</sup>

Within a fairly short space of time, the Populist upsurge subsided, its capacity for mischief among the proletariat correspondingly lessened. Events vindicated DeLeon's emphasis on silver as the weather-vane of the movement and his diagnosis of Populism as a decidedly unrevolutionary force. Yet the experience left its impact on him, causing him to redouble his vigilance against the disruptive potential of the reformer's probing fusionist tentacles. During a lecture delivered some six years after the People's Party had been absorbed by the Bryan Democracy, DeLeon advanced as axiomatic the proposition that:

The Proletarian Revolution alone means the abolition of Class Rule. It follows from such a lay of the land that any class the proletariat may ally itself with must, though oppressed from above, itself be a fleecers' class; in other words, must be a class whose class interests rest on the subjugation of workers. Such a class is the modern Middle Class. It . . . can ally itself with the proletariat only with the design to ride it. However plausible its slogans, they are only lures.<sup>70</sup>

Although the Populist menace had declined, the field was not clear for the unimpeded growth of the Socialist Labor Party. By 1901, a new, more potent nemesis, the Socialist Party of America, had risen to fill the void. Composed partially of the Midwest-based Social Democratic Party and partially of the dissident SLP faction that bolted the Party in 1899,<sup>71</sup> the Socialist Party immediately established itself as a formidable rival and constituted, for the remainder of DeLeon's life, his major political headache.

The most galling thing to him about the SP was its association of the word "Socialist" with a platform that reeked of reform. The blurring of what were for DeLeon two opposites especially rankled, because it obfuscated the real meaning of socialism in the minds of friend and foe alike and undermined the effort to rear a genuine socialist movement upon Marxist teaching. To discredit the pretenders, then, to deny them the right to stand before the public as socialists, was a mission he undertook with a vengeance. When running for Congress in 1908 on New York's Lower East Side, a section with the potential for a sizable socialist vote, DeLeon was advised by campaign aides that his Socialist Party opponent, Morris Hillquit, was seeking an arrangement whereby DeLeon would withdraw his candidacy so as not to divide the socialist vote. DeLeon's reply was unambiguous, bespeaking the utter contempt he had for Hillquit's bastard version of the socialist creed and the nefarious works for which he held it accountable: "Tell them that if I can take away one vote from Mr. Hillquit, my running will not have been in vain. Morris Hillquit shall not represent Socialism on the East Side or elsewhere."<sup>72</sup> Hillquit did not succeed in carrying socialism to the U.S. Congress, but his Socialist Party colleague, Victor Berger, did, being the first man bearing the socialist label to be elected to Congress. DeLeon accordingly directed close editorial attention to Berger's performance in Washington: in 1911, during the Milwaukee congressman's first session, the *Daily People* published, between April and October, no less than thirty-one critical editorials on his activities.<sup>73</sup> Commenting on Berger's participation in a debate on the relative well-being of the workingman, DeLeon censored " 'the first and only Socialist in Congress' " for "sham[ing] . . . the Socialist Movement" by making "an unconditional surrender to capitalist theory, capitalist false figures, and capitalist falser reasoning, when victory and the utter annihilation of all these was in his power." On the subject of the deficient old-age pension bill Berger introduced, his SLP critic stated that "Socialism was exhibited" thereby as "dumb and craven," "ignorant," and "shoddy." And of Berger's absence from the chamber when an "anti-Socialist pronouncement" was uttered on the floor, DeLeon wrote: "Having regularly missed every opportunity to do his duty by the Working Class and by Socialism when he was present in Congress, he, logically enough, concluded he might as well stay away from his post in Congress, away even from Washington, and exhibit himself upon public platforms where to solace himself in

the sun of the facile popularity yielded by gaping and curious crowds." Berger's failings only demonstrated to DeLeon the validity of his estimate of the SP as an ersatz body, one where "there is nothing of Socialism but the name," where "only speculat[ion] on the word" occurred, and where the "officialdom and press conduct themselves with Socialism in the way of wild Indians who have found a watch."<sup>74</sup>

Except for its name, the Socialist Party, as far as he was concerned, fit the familiar reformist mold. It was, at bottom, "sympathetic to capitalism" and a buffer used by the latter against the authentic adversary, the SLP; it represented "to the plutocracy and against the Socialist Labor Party what the 'Labor Lieutenants' of the capitalist class are to capitalism and against the Union." Castigating Tom Watson for interpreting as typically socialist a dubious plank in the Bergerite Milwaukee Social Democratic platform, DeLeon charged that, on the contrary, the proposal was "a chip of the reform block of Populism," and that Watson's fault-finding "arrows . . . from the pot of Populistic reform" were but "aimed at the kettle of the Milwaukee S.D.P." The general program of the socialist city administration in Berger's home town, which to DeLeon exemplified perfectly the Socialist Party's betrayal of Marxism, was dismissed by him as "the same old regulation bourgeois clap-trap of reform decked in the trappings of Socialism," even "squaring at all points with the bourgeois conception which looks down upon and degrades labor." This was not to be wondered at, since, on the whole, the Socialist Party was "essentially bourgeois," a "legitimate . . . offshoot of bourgeois thought, which is clogged with 'reform' notions." What cinched the point for DeLeon were the complaints heard in SP quarters in 1912 to the effect that the Roosevelt Progressives were raiding the party's program and thus "stealing its thunder." He remarked drolly that: "The stealing of thunder can be done only by kindred spirits from kindred spirits. Where no such kinship exists, no 'thunder' can be stolen; where 'thunder' is stolen, stealer and stealee are kith and kin."<sup>75</sup>

Specifically, the Socialist Party evinced its fatal flaw of bourgeois reformism in a variety of ways. First, the party was "a genuine breath" of the AFL, its stand on the union question exposing it as a body "that dances to the fiddle of Labor-dividing pure and simpledom." The SP was also guilty of "throw[ing] discipline to the dogs as 'narrow,' . . . fus[ing] with capitalist parties as an evidence of its 'tolerance' and tolerat[ing] an irresponsible privately-owned press as a proof of its 'free-



dom.' " Devoid of discipline, the Socialists espoused "heterogeneous tactics and principles," "preach[ing] different tenets in different latitudes and longitudes as 'autonomy.' "76 Moreover, the bourgeois party of "socialism" had a marked proclivity for palliatives, for "getting something now," which, in all likelihood, would eventually cause it to "be interred with the other rainbow-chasers, upon whose headstones is to be read the inscription, 'I tried to get "something now" and got here.' " Hence, in conformity with the fate of all reform organizations, the Socialist Party would, of necessity, fall prey to its own inadequacies and was therefore to be regarded as only "a transitory affair," a pathetic contrast to the genuine party of socialism.<sup>77</sup>

## 6 *Toward a Broader-Based Party*

The hard line that DeLeon set down in his theory of party organization, together with his abhorrence of reformism in all its manifestations, constitutes one of the dominant themes of his career in the socialist movement. Historians have by and large allowed it to define the man totally, but to do so obscures the ambivalence that DeLeon experienced on this score. In fact, a subordinate, though revealing, thread of pragmatic flexibility ran parallel to the hard line. While DeLeon held that a viable revolutionary movement required iron discipline, unbending adherence to principle, and ideological uniformity, he also sensed, dimly at first, more sharply as events unfolded, that the high, impregnable walls thrown up around the movement in consequence of these qualities could imprison and isolate as well as protect. He gradually came to the realization that his concept of the party as a self-reliant, self-contained microcosm of the proletarian community of the future clashed with what he recognized as the party's mission to be nucleus and creator of that community. A contradiction, then, presented itself between the party viewed as a community in the here-and-now and the party viewed as but a protocommunity heralding and working toward a new social order. Impaled upon the horns of the surfacing contradiction, DeLeon groped toward its resolution through the 1890s and well into the new century. The problem, as he perceived it, was "that a revolutionary movement, in order to be successful, must combine the elements of Order and Progress: it must keep Order while making Progress, and must make Progress while keeping Order." And he admitted that "the exclusive stationariness of order impeded progress." How to make the movement grow and at

the same time remain true to itself, how to be supple and firm in the correct proportions, where to draw the line between responsiveness and opportunism—such were the questions with which DeLeon wrestled. And his struggle with them can be read in the duality of his outlook of these years on the matter of the Party and reform.<sup>1</sup>

His attitude toward reform was not in fact as fixed and unequivocal as it might have appeared. This could be noted even as the first blush of a commitment to Marxism was causing him to despair over the immanent reform mentality of the Nationalist clubs. Addressing a rally called to observe the first international celebration of May Day, which commemorated the massive, May 1, 1886, eight-hour day upheaval in the United States, DeLeon was well aware that he could not sensibly ignore a reform idea that stirred such enthusiasm. While he offered the prediction that “the battle will continue until the laborer gets the full product of his labor,” he still paid his respects to the eight-hour demand by speaking of it as something that “must and shall be gained.” When the economic crisis of the mid-1890s struck, DeLeon adjusted his position in similar fashion to meet the needs of the times. Acutely conscious of the inappropriateness of holding forth on the glories of some future cooperative commonwealth before wretched, starving, desperate victims of a depression, he associated himself in this period with a broad front of labor and reform organizations demanding immediate relief measures from the government to allay the widespread misery, speaking at protest meetings and serving on delegations to City Hall and the state capital. In this national calamity he was inclined to justify building a strong socialist movement on the ground that it could effectively pressure capitalist politicians to aid the unemployed, and in some cases he relaxed his stern, censorious posture toward SLP sections fusing in local elections with reform elements, this despite his simultaneous flailing at the Populist insurgency rising on the very same wings of economic disaster.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was DeLeon's undercurrent of tolerance for reform and reformers only to be detected under extraordinary conditions. In more normal times later in the decade the door was left slightly ajar for electoral cooperation on a local level with other groups, the proviso being that the prospective collaborators would have to have in their platforms the demand for the socialization of all means of production and distribution. The contemptible Victor Berger, moreover, could be credited with a “hit” among his many “misses” when presenting a solid

proposal for reforming the Constitution. And in his final word on the subject of immediate demands, DeLeon did not dispute that reforms were desirable as "intermediary stepping stones," he only objected to their enumeration as "demands" in the program of the revolutionary movement. He believed that reform demands were implicitly subsumed under the one stated demand of revolution, "included . . . as a matter of course," much as the "setting up of tents, digging of trenches, providing for sanitation, etc., etc." were the assumed preliminary steps to an army's capture of an enemy city—means to an end too trivial and temporary to work into the formal plan of attack. "The specification of them, or of any of them," DeLeon reasoned, would be "superfluous" and would only distract attention from the real mission of the movement.<sup>3</sup>

The abstruseness of this rendering of doctrine on reform derived from the fact that DeLeon never firmly settled in his own mind what constituted that worthless, counterproductive quantity he stigmatized as reform and what did not, and his definitions and distinctions were wont to break down when he endeavored to apply them in discrete instances. The theoretic outcome was a pattern of inconsistency and vagueness that may have confused his fellow Party members and has definitely confounded subsequent interpreters. As DeLeon's son remembered his father's position on the palliative question, "it was anything but unambiguous." Solon DeLeon recalled: "I think sometimes he condemned reform outright, at other times he said that the party did not oppose alleviations . . . I think if you read . . . [him] carefully you'll find a considerable amount of ambiguity and vagueness. I think you'll find the word 'reform' used in different senses in different places." Solon saw in the elder DeLeon's treatment of reform a "sort of a no man's ground . . . , an ambiguity within which he was carried one way or the other depending on the particular circumstance." He doubted that his father's stand on it "was clear even to him" or that "he ever worked it out specifically." Solon's recollections further suggest that the source of DeLeon's ambiguity on reform was his attempt to straddle the two stools of order and progress, his effort to reconcile the party-as-community with the party-as-protocommunity. Commenting on some open letters authored by the "Old Man" for the *Daily People* that seemed to be at variance with his normal "uncompromising" stance, Solon remembered that his father "was trying to save himself from apparently taking a position which condemned any im-

provement within capitalism. At the same time he wanted to see that the party did not align itself with these [reform] movements and use any of its energies working for them." And returning to the topic a little later, he continued: "I think these letters indicate a considerable amount of uncertainty in the Old Man's mind—just how he was going to phrase the situation so that he could spank some old lady reformer and tell her [her] reform is no good without going overboard and saying things which would indicate[,] to a careless reader[,] that about all reforms."<sup>4</sup>

That DeLeon's stand on reform was not as forthright and clear-cut as has been commonly supposed is also perceptible when his reactions to competing movements are looked at in their entirety. Populism, for example, was repeatedly excoriated by DeLeon as the poisonous excrescence of a declining petit-bourgeoisie. Yet, here too, the conclusion must be qualified. Initially, DeLeon did not oppose the Populists, and until the middle of 1891, actually supported cooperation with them, although only a brief period had elapsed since his break with the similarly reform-oriented Nationalists.<sup>5</sup> Touring the country in the spring of 1891, he reported that the People's Party in various sections was moving steadily in the direction of socialism, and as late as April of the following year, he could, while disagreeing with him, say complimentary things about Tom Watson. And though Populism after 1891 became the object of scorn in the *People's* editorials, DeLeon nevertheless refused to write off the entire movement as eternally damned. As he would subsequently do in the case of the Socialist Party, he descried in the bucolic morass of Populism a submerged segment of the movement that minimized financial panaceas and advanced "more genuinely radical demands" that focused on "the real question—the private or monopolistic ownership of machinery and all other necessities of production." Consequently, he anticipated that sooner or later this "really radical or socialist element" would "unfurl the banner of international socialism" and "stand shoulder to shoulder" with the SLP. Encouraged by this prospect, DeLeon and his party actively recruited among the Populists, though the groundswell of prairie Marxism he thought he discerned proved a chimera.<sup>6</sup>

Although a great horde of converts from Populism never materialized, not even after fusion with the Bryan Democracy in 1896, DeLeon persisted in the belief that reform movements appealing to labor, however deplorable in themselves, left in their wake "a more or less

solid sediment for the Socialist Labor Party [to retrieve]." The notion governed his approach particularly toward the Socialist Party, which he came to regard as a perplexing farrago of promising and objectionable properties, and he resolved to in some way precipitate the SP's "solid sediment" from the putrid solution in which it was suspended. Of course, DeLeon regularly lambasted most of the SP's prominent figures and their policies, but he was also mindful of the "solid sediment" and did not hesitate to highlight it when the occasion warranted. A case in point was his relation of a minor incident occurring at the Amsterdam Congress of the International in 1904, whose only purpose could have been to nurture what he identified as a positive conatus among SP men, or perhaps to impart to the SLP rank and file the message that the SP was not monolithic in its wickedness, that of its number there were people with possibilities. DeLeon recounted that a young man on the convention floor named Nicholas Klein recognized him, rose from his seat, "and cheerily reached out his hand." DeLeon was somewhat taken aback when Klein introduced himself as a Socialist Party delegate and a reporter for the pro-SP sheet *Appeal to Reason*, and then announced: " 'Whenever I meet a Socialist I feel that I meet a brother.' " The usually combative SLP leader admitted that that "gladsome greeting turned aside whatever rapier I might otherwise have raised against a political foe," although he did sarcastically probe the younger man a bit about the *Appeal*. But Klein refused to take the bait and replied "jovially" that " 'Socialists should not fight.' " The climax of DeLeon's little story came when he left the seat he had taken next to Klein to confer with British SLP delegates. He depicted what then ensued:

While there, talking with them, I presently heard my name uttered behind me in what seemed to be a short but animated little spat. Turning around I saw that several other members of the 'Socialist' or 'Social Democratic' delegation had arrived; they seemed disinclined to respect the symbols of possession I had left behind at the desirable seat. But Klein insisted that that was 'Comrade DeLeon's' seat, and they desisted. Klein had shown himself loyal, though an adversary.

DeLeon's confidence in "adversary" Klein's integrity was vindicated later when the weightier matter of an immigration restriction resolution was presented before the Congress by Klein's SP colleagues. The

*Appeal* reporter, DeLeon told his readers, "with flashing, inspired eyes, . . . declared he 'would feel ashamed, as an American citizen, to vote for such a resolution!' ""

Further demonstrating that DeLeon was not of one mind about the Socialist Party was the manner in which he dealt with Eugene V. Debs, who, as the Party's best-known and most popular personage and its standard-bearer through five Presidential campaigns, made himself virtually synonymous with the SP. DeLeon's instinctive affinity for Debs was manifested even before Debs became a socialist, during the mid-nineties when he was first developing a class-conscious perspective as a railroad union leader. Though Debs's political naiveté and romanticism elicited a few reservations in DeLeon's editorial commentary, he was ordinarily spared the blasts directed at other non-SLP trade union leaders. While Debs might falter, he, unlike the others, seemed to be moving in the "right directions" and was thus gently chided for errors that would, if committed by almost anyone else, have drawn a torrent of SLP abuse. Obviously, what impressed DeLeon about Debs was the latter's determined exertions on behalf of the American Railway Union, an organization designed to transcend the traditional craft divisions in the industry and represent all railroaders as a body. DeLeon supported the ARU, evidently reading it as a signpost on the road to class consciousness, and chose to overlook for the moment the new union's apolitical orientation. The great Pullman strike waged by Debs's union in 1894 galvanized that support, and the fall of that year saw the two men sharing the platform at a Brooklyn rally, the *People* afterward praising Debs for doing "the workers in his audience a valuable service." The chances that Debs would soon cast his lot with the Socialist Labor Party seemed quite good.<sup>8</sup>

DeLeon and his SLP comrades were, however, to be disappointed. In 1896, Debs supported William Jennings Bryan and the silver Democrats. Notwithstanding this overt rejection of socialism, DeLeon did not turn on the ARU leader, but endeavored to tutor him publicly through measured doses of temperate criticism. For instance, in an 1897 editorial, which, withal, voiced his "warm esteem for the good intentions of Mr. Debs," DeLeon pointed out that the defeat of the ARU was ultimately attributable to its abandonment of the political field to the class enemy. Debs did not respond altogether favorably to this tack and began sniping back in the pages of his union organ, the *Railway Times*. Still, DeLeon restrained himself and assured an anxi-

ous reader of the *People* from Debs's home town of Terre Haute, Indiana, that personalities would not "affect our conduct." DeLeon's method paid some dividends during 1897 and 1898, as Debs, now moving to the left politically, flirted with the idea of establishing a cooperative commonwealth piecemeal, through colonization, under the aegis of the Social Democracy of America. In 1897, with the colonization scheme foremost in his mind, Debs advised his followers to vote for the SLP as "the only anti-capitalist party in the field," and envisioned that in the national election of 1900 the SDA would espouse the same principles as the SLP, adding that "its [the SDA's] political battles will, doubtless, be fought under the banner of that party." But such hopes as might have been raised by these projections were dashed when the SDA split in 1898, its partisans falling out over whether to emphasize the political or the colonization aspects of their program. The political wing reorganized itself as the Social Democratic Party, with Debs among its founders. Debs's role in launching a rival to the SLP was too much for DeLeon. He finally moved to the attack, which intensified after the Debs group merged early in the new century with the anti-DeLeon faction of the SLP to form the Socialist Party.<sup>9</sup>

However, upon the formation in 1905 of the Industrial Workers of the World, a defiant, class-conscious, politically radical flowering of the industrial union idea that had inspired the ARU, it became apparent that in the intervening years Debs's ideological evolution had continued, and though the preceding period had been marked by a lack of cordiality between himself and DeLeon, the views of the two men had by this time reached a point of convergence.<sup>10</sup> The first IWW convention provided the scene for a public reconciliation, and the virtually complete agreement it signified on the major issues facing the working class fostered cooperation and better personal relations thereafter.<sup>11</sup> The anomaly of two reciprocally hostile American socialist parties led by men sharing a common outlook was fated to endure, but DeLeon had found in Debs an exemplar of the "solid sediment" he was seeking.

DeLeon's sanguineness, during his IWW years, about the latent resources in the Socialist Party was also justified by the enthusiastic response he and his views often received from the SP rank and file, especially in the West, which had not experienced to any great extent the bitter infighting, between pro- and anti-DeLeon factions, that had raged in New York in the late nineties. The existence of a sympathetic



element in the rival camp was revealed to DeLeon with particular strength during a cross-country speaking tour he made for the IWW in 1907. A report in the union press of one incident occurring during DeLeon's stop in St. Louis illustrates how SP rank-and-filers frequently reacted to his lectures:

A young Socialist party man, with an inquiring mind, desired to hear Daniel DeLeon's address . . . , and not knowing the location of the hall where the meeting was to be held, called up . . . G. A. Hoehn, mentor of the S.P. in the Missouri metropolis. Making known what he wanted, the young Socialist was greatly surprised when there came rattling over the wire: 'Why, you ain't going to hear that old fool, are you?' followed by a refusal to give the information. But the young man, more intent than before on hearing what DeLeon had to say, managed to find the meeting. He listened and when it was over modestly arose from his seat and told the audience all about it. 'I was told not to come and hear the "old fool," ' he said, 'but I have listened and must say that my eyes have been opened!'

DeLeon was probably even more heartened by the welcome extended to him when he spoke in California. Invited to address an assembly sponsored by the Los Angeles local of the Socialist Party, DeLeon powerfully impressed his hosts, as can be gleaned from accounts of the meeting. After lecturing to a hall " 'packed to the skies' " where he "was made to feel thoroughly at home," DeLeon found "Socialist party members crowded around him" who "greeted him as the 'old war horse' and agreed that it was time to mend their ways." Los Angeles Socialist Alfred Sanftleben, an attendant at this as well as DeLeon's other engagements in the area, recorded that "these meetings of DeLeon mark an epoch in the local movement, just as the personality of the man will remain a markstone in the history of the American labor movement." As a result of his missionary work for the IWW, DeLeon had won sufficient respect among the rank and file of the Socialist Party to have some of its number rise publicly to his defense when he came under attack by the SP's leading figures. Hence, when Algie Simons assailed DeLeon's work at the 1907 Congress of the International in Stuttgart, he triggered the indignation of fellow Socialist Ward H. Mills, who charged Simons with uttering "maliciously misleading rot." Mills further rejoined: "Pray, where and how did you figure in that great convention? I see nowhere any illusions [*sic*] as to

how you contributed in any notable way to the interest of that convention. I do see where . . . DeLeon did." The irate SP man suggested that the source of Simons' malevolence might be "jealousy of other men's ability in the Socialist movement, in their intellectuality, astuteness and leadership," and he declared that he regretted that the representative of his party had "stultified himself in a manner so evidently malicious and unreasonable."<sup>12</sup>

The closeness to DeLeon and his party felt by Socialists like Mills led to thoughts of eventual socialist unity. The occasion of DeLeon's successful speech to Local Los Angeles prompted Sanftleben, for example, to project "a united party of Socialism in some future" and to look to "the coming solidarity of all factions of labor, which is bound to come." In the wake of the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World, actual moves toward unity, on the basis of the new union's class-conscious, revolutionary principles, were undertaken in various localities, first and most notably in New Jersey, where the process reached the advanced stage of a state-wide referendum of both parties before being aborted by the "nay" vote of the SP membership. DeLeon, in his report to the Socialist International Congress of 1907, was enough encouraged by these developments to predict that a national SP referendum on unity was in the offing, and his confidence in the prediction was bolstered by the fact that "many of the best members and groups of members in the Socialist party, too impatient to await the slow process of the referendum, . . . are daily withdrawing from the Socialist party, joining the Socialist Labor Party and issuing printed statements of their reasons for so doing." He optimistically presumed that unity would simply produce an enlarged version of the SLP, whose program was now identical with that of the IWW, and that the resulting structure would serve as the "political reflex" of the union anticipated in its preamble. It was the Socialist Party that would have to undergo alteration, thought DeLeon, for the "members of the Socialist Labor Party" already enter "the Industrial Workers of the World as ducks do a mill-pond," while the Socialists, when faced by the issue of the IWW, are seen to "segregat[e] into that party's component elements; one element, like ducks that had been hatched out by hens, fraternizing on and in their common element with their newly-found brothers from the S.L.P.; the other element, like hens who had hatched out ducks, cackling and fluttering and scolding, incensed at a thing that is contrary to their nature." Only the means by which unity would be effected was open to speculation, not its foundation:

How things will shape themselves—whether the clear-headed and upright elements in the Socialist party will be able to attain control of and cleanse their own party and in that case whether that cleansed party will merge in the S.L.P., or, jointly with it, perfect a new party, under a new name; or whether those clear-headed and upright elements in the S.P. will fail within their own party, be absorbed in the S.L.P., and they, who alone impart whatever fiber and respect the S.P. today possesses and enjoys, having withdrawn and the old S.P. having inevitably collapsed in consequence, the Industrial Workers of the World will accept the S.L.P. or the newly-organized Party as its political reflex; or, as a third hypothesis, whether in any event the Industrial Workers of the World will prefer to cast its own political reflex, disentangled from all annoying reminiscences of past political conflicts—all that, forsooth, rests on the knees of the gods.<sup>13</sup>

The hopeful signs that the Socialist Party was now going through some kind of metamorphosis seemed to vindicate DeLeon's general assessment of possible unity a few years earlier, after the Amsterdam Congress of 1904 had resolved that "there should be but one Socialist party in each country . . . , just as there is but one proletariat in each country" and that "all Socialist organizations have the imperative duty to seek to the utmost of their power to bring about this unity." In addition to the wishes of the international movement, the meteoric rise of the fortunes of the newer party in the preceding four years<sup>14</sup> against the backdrop of a dismal decline in the SLP dictated that the relationship of the two parties in the context of American socioeconomic realities be searchingly reviewed.

Although, in the flush of the progress the SLP seemed to be making after 1905, DeLeon located the source of "the current in that direction" in the period preceding the Amsterdam unity resolution, when supposedly "some of the most valuable elements in the Socialist party" already "had begun to draw nearer to the Socialist Labor Party," the facts indicate otherwise. Between 1901 and 1904, the Socialist Labor Party gave every appearance of a movement on its last legs. Already shaken by the great rupture of 1899, the Party presently experienced many defections of a more serious nature: "functionaries of the party, agitators, organizers, members of the editorial staff of the *Daily People*, secretaries of state committees, writers in prose and writers in rhyme," people described by Party historian Henry Kuhn as "blood of our blood and flesh of our flesh." The departures, according to Kuhn,

"deeply affected" DeLeon, causing him to quip bravely, as another comrade recalled, "that he had to look at himself in the mirror at least once a day to find out whether he had not gone with the others!" A further symptom of the SLP's withered condition, one no doubt especially worrisome to DeLeon, was the anemic state of the Party press, the *Daily People's* circulation figures falling to such an embarrassingly low ebb at this time that they were no longer made public.<sup>15</sup> Hence, by 1904, DeLeon was once again haunted by the nightmare of isolation and moved to assay and reexamine certain of his assumptions about the Socialist Party and the American political landscape in light of the adversities that had befallen his party.

For one thing, the situation compelled him to qualify his earlier estimate of the maturity of American capitalism. Until 1904, his theory of party organization and his analysis of reform both rested on the view that capitalism in America was approaching its final stages and that conditions were thus ripe for revolutionary transformation. The contrasting backwardness of the labor movement he had blamed solely on the cumulative impact of a political tradition studded with cranks and charlatans. However, he was now ready to concede that American society presented a more skewed, complicated pattern of social and economic development and that the resiliency of reform ideas had a material basis in the socioeconomic incompleteness the pattern revealed. He concluded that the evaluation of the American class structure rendered by Marx in 1852 in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* remained essentially valid more than a half-century later. The United States, Marx had written, was a nation where

the classes . . . have not yet acquired permanent character, are in constant flux and reflux, constantly changing their elements and yielding them up to one another; where the modern means of production, instead of coinciding with a stagnant population, rather compensate for the relative scarcity of heads and hands; and finally, where the feverishly youthful life of material production, which has to appropriate a new world to itself, has so far left neither time nor opportunity to abolish the illusions of old.

DeLeon observed that:

The giant strides since made by America, her fabulous production of wealth, rise in manufacture and agriculture that practically place her at the head of all other nations in this respect, in short, the stupendous stage of capitalist development that the

country has reached, would seem to remove the contrast. It does not. These changes are not enough to draw conclusions as to the stage of Socialism that may be expected.

The factor that upset the expected correlation between capitalism's advance and widespread class consciousness among the proletariat was the Turnerian frontier, which begat a "geologic lay of social conditions" inimical to the prospering of socialism.

Machinery and methods of production, discarded in more advanced centers, are constantly reappearing in less advanced localities, carried thither by the flux of our population westward. It goes without saying, that under such conditions, not only is the population still not 'stagnant,' not only is there still a 'constant flux and reflux,' not only is there still a 'constant changing' or 'yielding up to one another' by the classes, but that still the odd phenomenon is visible in America of families with members in all classes, from the upper and plutocratic class, down through the various gradations of the middle class, down to the 'house-and-lot'-owing wage slave in the shop, and even further down to the wholly propertyless proletariat. It goes without saying that, under such conditions, there still is in America that 'feverishly youthful life of material production' and that, accordingly, 'the illusions of old' have not yet had time to be wiped out.<sup>16</sup>

DeLeon, anticipating the explanations of later labor historians<sup>17</sup> for the apparent paucity of class consciousness in the American working class, also cited a related element, large-scale immigration, as stunting the growth of the movement:

Nor has the immigration from Europe aided matters. On the whole it has fallen in with the stream as it flows. It is, for instance, a conservative estimate that if one-half the Europeans, now located in Greater New York, and who in their old homes pronounced themselves Socialists, remained so here, the Socialist organization in the city alone would have not less than 25,000 enrolled members. Yet there is no such membership or anything like it. The natives' old illusions regarding material prospects draw the bulk of the immigrants into their vortex.<sup>18</sup>

In sum, DeLeon argued,

such conditions point to the existing bourgeois republic of America as still traveling in the orbit that Marx observed it in . . . In

short, these conditions explain why, as yet, despite the stupendous development of capitalism in the country, a numerically powerful Socialist Labor Party, such as such a capitalist development might at first blush mislead the casual observer into expecting, does not and cannot yet exist.

They also, he remarked

throw valuable light upon the nature of the 'revolutionary movements' that periodically spring up, whose discordant waves angrily beat against the Socialist Labor Party . . . [They explain] the flaring up of the Single Tax movement with its 300,000 votes in the eighties; . . . the Populist movement of a decade later . . . with its 1,200,000 votes; . . . [and] the latest of the series in direct line of succession, the so-called Socialist or Social Democratic movement of this decade with its 250,000 votes.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, his reappraisal of the American political matrix notwithstanding, DeLeon balked at a tactical departure for the SLP that would square with the newly perceived realities he had outlined. Gagging on this bitter pill, he clung to the position that "the criterion of the seaworthiness of a Socialist movement in the waters of American conditions" were "the quantity and quality" of its propaganda, "the strictness of its self-imposed discipline," and "the firmness and intrepidity of its posture." Treating the controversies of the socialist movements in other countries, he could admit that principle could not, by itself, "prescribe the details of action, the tactics, of a Socialist movement," that these "also depend[ed] upon the exigencies and accidents of the field, together with the temperament of those engaged in the movement." But he could not bring himself to act on this judgment. He agreed that in a nation whose historical process had not yet reached the stage of a fully developed, advanced capitalism "bona fide reform could and can be wrung from the possessing classes for the working class" and that "SO LONG AS SUCH REFORMS ARE TO BE GAINED, THEY SHOULD BE STRIVEN FOR." However, since he contended that "where such reforms are possible, they are so just because a true Socialist movement is not yet possible," he chose to define immature capitalism only in terms of the continued presence of a "still mighty" feudal class, ignoring the clear implications of his examination of the retarding effects of westward expansion and immigration in the American case. This allowed him to escape the inconsistency between his analysis of American conditions and his persevering hard

line and to speak of the United States, devoid of feudal remnants, as a country whose "ground is ready for revolution to step on."<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, unity between the two parties of socialism in America, one inclined in the direction of reform and the other rooted firmly in the class struggle, was not possible. During the debate on the unity resolution at the 1904 Amsterdam Congress of the International, DeLeon did intend to propose a merger with the SP on the basis of the antirevisionist Dresden-Amsterdam resolution that had been previously adopted, but the tone and manner of the proposal indicated that it was not a serious overture, but rather one designed for polemical effect, to score debater's points against the opposition before the assembled representatives of the international movement. He was well aware that the Socialists had no interest in such a plan. The unity resolution itself DeLeon deemed unrealistic, typical of what he found to be a "leading defect of . . . international congresses"—the absence of an "evolutionary perspective," the propensity to "seek to fit movements of unequal evolutionary size into beds of equal length of shortness." He maintained that

the . . . stage . . . where . . . a policy of conciliation is possible . . . always presupposes a previous stage. It presupposes the stage where the clash of conflict has pounded to dust the incrustations of error that tactics, often the best of them, first make their appearance in. The indispensable preparatory work of clarification having been gone through during that previous stage, a country's movement is then, and not before, ripe to enter into the next evolutionary stage . . . At the earlier stage rupture is an element of progress; at the second, harmony. Of the truth of this synthesis the movement in America has had, and is still having striking proof.

Elaborating, he expected that:

Pounded between the upper and the nether millstone of the S.L.P. and its rival, whatever incrustation of serious error either's policy is coated with will be ground to dust and blown to the wind. Then will the movement in America enter upon the evolutionary stage of harmony, and it will be in condition to do so only because it passed through the purging evolutionary stage of rupture—two distinct evolutionary stages, that, being successive and not simultaneous, reject identical treatment, as our continental comrades seek to administer.

"That but one party of Socialism will eventually be seen in . . . America" was, to DeLeon, a certainty:

The evolutionary stage of harmony is as inevitable a stage as that of adult growth from infancy—provided life continues; and just as in manhood, the evolutionary stage of rupture is the inevitable precursor of unity—the unity in which, full scope being allowed for the differences in temperament unavoidable in mass movements, the individual units are held together by a double bond: the bond of principle and that of tactics purged of error by experience.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding this therapeutic clash that he saw taking place between his party and the SP, DeLeon was quite explicit about which "millstone" was most in need of a cleansing. As he put it,

If—upon the theory that there always is some virtue even in the deepest-dyed villain—any grain of help to the Socialist Revolution should lie concealed in . . . [SP] policy; and, on the other hand, if—upon the theory, again, that there always is some vice even in the most angelic man—any grain of harm to the Social Revolution should lie hidden in the opposite [SLP] policy, the conflict will bring out both.<sup>22</sup>

In short, DeLeon could, at this point, only conceive of unity on SLP principles. Although the SLP was staggering under the weight of repeated setbacks, he was determined to hold out and wait for the scales to drop from Socialist eyes. When the SLP was revived by the connection it established with the nascent Industrial Workers of the World in the summer of 1905 and a socialist consensus seemed to be forming around the position DeLeon had staked out, his uncompromising attitude toward unity in 1904 appeared validated.

However, the upsurge in SLP influence proved a temporary, limited affair. DeLeon had underestimated the strength of the SP's moderate leadership and its institutional staying-power. The loose, undisciplined, ideologically diverse nature of the movement, characteristics DeLeon found so reprehensible, tended, in this period, to immunize it against major factional cleavage and winner-take-all internecine warfare. Hence, while comrades might disagree, even bitterly, over the union question or other issues, the bonds holding the SP together were capable of absorbing the shock.<sup>23</sup> When DeLeon expected the party to break up over the IWW, he was deluding himself, perhaps falsely



extrapolating from what a similar conflict would have done to his more rigidly structured SLP. In any event, a unified movement constructed on SLP lines did not come about.

And this was not the only part of DeLeon's plan that was going awry. The IWW was itself beset with financial and organizational difficulties during its first years of life, its energies and resources being largely consumed by fruitless internal squabbling. Moreover, between the 1907 and 1908 conventions, DeLeon's own position in the union became doubtful as he locked horns with erstwhile allies over whether the IWW even needed a "political reflex" at all, an argument that had been carried on desultorily since the first convention but which now took on greater moment as the only major ideological controversy that had not been brought to a head by previous factional fighting. As the disagreement continued to fester, the likelihood increased of a showdown at the 1908 convention, a showdown in which DeLeon's chances of prevailing were, as he must have known, quite slim.<sup>24</sup>

Facing the prospect of a return to the hard times the SLP had suffered prior to the IWW's founding, DeLeon looked once again at the possibility of unity with the Socialist Party, some of whose members concurred in his position on the necessity of a political arm in a revolutionary industrial movement,<sup>25</sup> while all, obviously, accepted at least the general principle that labor must struggle on the political as well as the economic field. But he could no longer afford the aloof, self-assured posture he had hitherto maintained on the subject; the discrepancy between analysis and prescription could no longer be glossed over. The SP was strong and growing stronger; the SLP faced a forbidding future of irrelevance, cut off from the proletariat's main currents of class-conscious political and industrial action. DeLeon could not wait for that blissful evolutionary stage of harmony to ensue from the pounding together of the parties' respective "millstones," for he knew quite well that the SLP millstone could not take much more pounding, that it might be reduced to dust and "blown to the wind" more easily than the heavy "incrustation of serious error" coating the stone of the rival. The SLP, he realized, would now have to make good his 1907 claim that it was "ever ready to overhaul and re-examine its tenets." Where before he had insisted on "reform or revolution," he was now prepared to try to synthesize these opposites, for, as Kassian Kovalchek has correctly noted, the real choice was "Socialism with reform" or "Socialism without hope for success."<sup>26</sup>

Hence, at a meeting of the Party's National Executive Committee in January 1908, a unity resolution was introduced and passed, and an invitation extended to the national officers of the Socialist Party to meet with SLP representatives to discuss a merger. The invitation was peremptorily rejected,<sup>27</sup> setting the stage for DeLeon's lecture, *Unity*, delivered toward the end of the following month. In many ways DeLeon's most intellectually impressive theoretical exposition, *Unity* grew out of a deep concern about his party's ability to continue to relate meaningfully to the broader proletarian community, to propel it forward in its historic mission. The SLP's role, DeLeon determined, could, with the IWW nexus now in jeopardy, only be secured in a united socialist party. *Unity* amounted to a personal declaration that he, as the Party's most prestigious and influential figure, was in earnest about the desirability of a united movement. And despite the fact that DeLeon, as mentioned earlier, announced at the outset that he was speaking only for himself as an individual active in the labor movement, *Unity* was no ordinary speech. That a stenographer was on hand to produce a verbatim record indicates that it was intended as a major statement of policy, pointing a new direction for the Party. It was clearly intended, too, as an entreaty to the Socialist Party leadership to reconsider its rejection of the SLP initiative of the previous month. As such, it gives the lie to the common historical depiction of DeLeon as a power-mad, rule-or-ruin dictator.<sup>28</sup> He certainly understood that the merging of his SLP with an unreconstructed Socialist Party would result in a diminution of his authority. The measure of his retreat in the speech from the hard line of earlier days also undermines the conventional simplism portraying him as an uncompromising dogmatist.<sup>29</sup> What *Unity* actually demonstrates about DeLeon is that his primary wish was not for personal power but rather for immersion in the bright, inevitably communitarian future of the proletariat. To this end he was capable of a considerable degree of compromise and ego sacrifice.

The masterful synthesis of *Unity* ironically took as its point of departure the notion of evolutionary development, upon which DeLeon's earlier objections to wholesale amalgamation of the two parties had been grounded. In reaction to the indiscriminating, ahistorical reasoning he believed underlay the framing of the Amsterdam unity resolution, he had remarked:

As in the sky the star-world reveals to us formations in various stages of development, from the nebulous, the half-formed and up to the full-orbed luminary; as in the woods specimens are seen from the tender sapling up to the wide-branched monarch of the forests; as all around us the humanity teems with individuals at different stages of growth from the infant up to the robust adult, —so likewise in the firmament of nations different societies are to-day moving in different evolutionary epochs. And, just as in the astronomic, the botanic and the human instances, a knowledge of the lower evolutionary stage aids in understanding whither the higher tends, so with the different Socialist movements of today.

The conclusion DeLeon had drawn then, it will be remembered, was that international congress resolutions were unsound if they were not phrased to take full account of the disparate conditions operative in countries at differing evolutionary stages; ergo, a blanket unity resolution could not apply to the American case, because the necessary "rupture" phase there had not run its course. In *Unity*, however, the evolutionary perspective was turned around to serve the cause of amity in America. The sure guide to a national modus vivendi was to be found in the diversity of the international movement. He who would untie the Gordian knot of unity, DeLeon now averred, "will not confine his observations to America. He will extend them over the International field." And when doing so, he would perceive a model in the International Socialist Congress, the institutional structure of " 'the Socialist family.' " He would appreciate that:

'The International Socialist Congress is cast in the mold of considering as members of the "Socialist family" all organizations—from the most rudimentary . . . up to the most clearly and soundly revolutionary . . .—provided they all aim, remotely or approximately, mediately or immediately, at the overthrow of the capitalist system of production. By the recognition of all such bodies as legitimate members of the "Socialist family," the International Congress establishes a basic principle of its own as the foundation for the unity of the "Socialist family." Basic principles, as a rule, are premises; in this instance the basic principle is not premises but goal. The International Congress considers the abstract goal to be the family bond for the "Socialist family." Upon that principle the Congress rears its organic structure. Furthermore, seeing

that correct methods for the reaching of a goal are themselves a matter of development, the International Congress considers the "Socialist family" as a nation, itself as the parliament of that nation, and the various constituent bodies of that parliament as reflecting the development of the several members of the "Socialist family." "

The catholicity of the theory on which the International rested, DeLeon added, "explains" its "broadness" and "the tolerance in its midst of bodies in various stages of development." To its credit, "the International Congress takes in 'Mountain' and 'Vale,' leaving to time to demonstrate whether the 'impossibilist' 'Mountain' of to-day, or the 'possibilist' 'Vale' is to be the force of tomorrow."<sup>30</sup>

The spirit of the International was accordingly seen by DeLeon as a step toward resolving intramovement conflict in America. Both the SP and the SLP, after all, were regularly seated in the Congresses "without opposition by either." Implicitly, then, "they both adopt the theory . . . regarding the 'Socialist family,' " and that "establishes the broad basis for concerted action." Specifically, DeLeon noted, "the application of the theory by the International Congress—proportional representation and freedom of agitational methods—points the way for the same application in America." Rancorous bickering over the events immediately preceding the call for unity was simply out of order. Nothing was to be gained, as far as DeLeon was concerned, by "deploring that the overtures were not made by the Socialist Party, or in trying to smell 'secret motives' in the move of the Socialist Labor Party," for "the move was due." Indeed, "it was overdue," and "had to come from either quarter." All that was germane was to work out the precise details of the merger within the general outline afforded by the International Congress. DeLeon allowed that such would present problems, but he believed that they would be manageable, for, "when true 'members of a family' differ upon methods, it should not be hard for them to hit upon a means of agreement." The means need not even involve formal compromise so much as "that each may realize some sense in the other, however temporary the sense,—the sense that the [S.P.] 'Vale' must, by experience, be ready to concede to the [S.L.P.] 'Mountain,' and, inversely, the 'Mountain' to the 'Vale.' " The Socialist Labor Party, for its part, DeLeon instructed, must recognize that "essential to the ultimate success of a Revolutionary Movement as may be and is the upholding, constant and clear to view, of all the

means necessary *on the day* of the 'home-stretch' just so necessary may, *before that day*, and simultaneously, be the looser methods of the 'Vale.' " The way around the current impasse was to treat the different approaches of the two parties not primarily as "a matter of abstract principle," but "as a matter of the practical distribution of functions—'Vale' and 'Mountain' each fulfilling its special function, while the consciousness of working to a common end may act as an allayer of the inevitable irritation that the impatience, typical with 'Mountains' to raise the 'Vale' to 'Mountain' height, and the sluggishness, typical with 'Vales,' to prolong their flatness, may generate all the while."<sup>31</sup>

Having set forth this guideline for harmony, DeLeon proceeded to use it to conciliate the discordant positions of the two parties in key areas of policy. One of these was the nettlesome question of party ownership of socialist publications, with the SLP, of course, strongly in favor, and the SP just as strongly opposed, both stands having had their origins in the bitter experiences of the late nineties. DeLeon himself was unbending in his commitment to the principle of party ownership, but seeking to overcome the controversy surrounding it, he saw the need to explore, without polemics, the reasons for the Socialist Party's contrary position. Hence, though he had "too keen an ear to fail to detect in much of the opposition to party-ownership the ring of [selfish] material interests," SP papers being privately owned, it was too simple to credit "that the material interests of a few individuals and corporations could dominate the broad membership of a wholly voluntary organization like that of a political party, except in spots." Rather, there was a "grain of sense" in the SP policy of private ownership, which DeLeon isolated by recourse to his earlier-limned portrait of uneven socioeconomic development in the United States. Reiterating his 1904 analysis, he reminded his audience that:

The United States, a country nearly as large, in point of area, as the whole of Europe, does not yet present a homogeneous economic aspect. Capitalism has spread in all directions, but so young is the country that primitive opportunities still occasionally crop up even in regions where capitalism is strongest, and, so vast is the country's territory, that primitive conditions still assert themselves over extensive regions . . . such diversity of conditions, implying different stages of economic development, is bound to be reflected in a variety of mental stages of development. Such varying mental stages require different treatment.

The two socialist parties, DeLeon suggested, represented different steps in the developmental process, the Socialist Party more accurately reflecting the "primitive conditions" prevalent over much of the country. Thus, it was useless to inveigh against the SP's shortcomings on the press issue. That party, because of its nature as the progeny of an inchoate social universe, was simply incapable of adopting the more sophisticated course of party ownership. As DeLeon put the case:

A proletarian element, that still has strong navel-string connections with bourgeois interests, can not be as solidly welded as an organization of proletarians with whom such navel-string ligaments have been sundered . . . The less class-developed a revolutionary element is, the less homogeneous it will be; the less homogeneous it is, the more torpid will be its sense of sacrifice; the more torpid its sense of sacrifice, the less focalized will be its efforts . . .

. . . the less class-developed composition of the Socialist Party, lacking the homogeneity that quickens the sense of sacrifice and focalizes efforts, could not possibly set up a press owned by itself. Incapable of that achievement, the Socialist Party was put to the alternative of either remaining tongue-tied, or accepting a press owned privately by individuals and corporations in their midst. Man adjusts his principles to his material possibilities. Seeing that the material possibilities of its composition disable it from producing its own party-owned press, the Socialist Party sings the praises of a privately-owned press . . . for the very [same] reason . . . [the SP] believes that party-ownership spells 'tyranny.'<sup>32</sup>

Once the two parties accepted the asymmetry that would be imposed on a united party by a still-evolving capitalist society, the would-be partners, DeLeon imagined, would find in their contrasting approaches to the press "no insuperable barrier" to cooperation; each could be left "to regulate its own system of ownership." He supposed that "mutual criticism would continue—sharp, if you please," but since "conducted by bodies who practice the International Congress theory regarding the 'Socialist family,' " it would be healthy and constructive, "the harshness of the manner . . . chastened to the profit of the matter." DeLeon expected that time and increasing "class-conscious clearness" would eventually decide the issue in his favor. But inasmuch as the change would be occurring gradually within the amalgamated party, "friction" or "rupture" could be avoided. He was

confident that "in the united party the transition would be accompanied by no such disagreeable consequences," there having been initially no "sacrifice of principle by either side."<sup>33</sup>

After disposing of the vexed question of press ownership, DeLeon next focused his attention on another significant bone of contention—the autonomy of party subdivisions. The Socialist Labor Party, as discussed above, planted itself firmly on the side of central authority and strict discipline; its policy-making structure rendered policy for the entire party; edicts were to be observed exactly, without exception, by all branches and sections. The Socialist Party, in part as a reaction to unhappy memories of centralization as practiced by the DeLeonite party, supported the principle of local autonomy, reserving a sizable amount of discretion and latitude to locals to meet as best they might the conditions peculiar to their areas of operation. To propitiate the diametrically opposed organizational concepts, DeLeon chose to treat them dialectically, not as simple opposites but as complements analogous to the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the physical world, by whose beneficial interaction, he advised, "our planetary system is kept in shape." He also noted that the poles of centralization and autonomy were productively coordinated in the American system of government: "Our system of Federal and State governments, respectively represent 'centralization' and 'autonomy.' The local self-government enjoyed by the several States is 'autonomy'; the Federal government is 'centralization.' Each system has its own sphere of action. The two combined keep the top spinning." DeLeon asserted that in any event, for the same reasons that a consensus could not yet be forged on a party-owned press, the immediate ascendancy of the more advanced SLP principle of party governance was not in prospect:

For the identical reason that an organization of 'Mountain' elements will necessarily move in focalized shape, and, accordingly, exhibit the aspect of 'centralization,' an organization of 'Vale' elements is bound to move divergently, and exhibit the aspect of 'autonomy.' It is not that the former starts with 'centralization' as a matter of principle, and the latter with 'autonomy,' also as a matter of principle . . . The one acts 'centrally,' the other 'autonomously,' as a result of their different compositions.

And, as with the respective policies on press ownership, he pointed out, " 'autonomy' has its transitory, and 'centralization' its permanent

function." Each party could, within its own sphere, fulfill its own function. Thus: "At the present stage of American mental conditions, only harm could come to the Movement from the prolongation of the dislocated operation of the 'centripetal' and the 'centrifugal' forces, which, at the present stage, should operate together."<sup>34</sup>

Along confederative lines, then, and with due heed to the complexity of the society he sought to transform, DeLeon hoped to erect a serviceable supraparty that could respond pragmatically to the present while keeping the future clearly in view. Terming the SLP unity gesture "proper," "wise," "noble," and "an act of loyalty to the International Congress, . . . the international proletariat in general, and . . . the American proletariat in particular," he called upon the Socialist Party to "act as properly, as wisely[,] . . . as nobly [and] as loyally" and join the SLP in reaching an accord. Unfortunately for the ideal of the "Socialist family," however, DeLeon's invitation to the SP to aid in healing the breach fell on deaf ears. Inured for years to his implacable hostility, the SP leaders were psychologically unable to accept DeLeon's appeal at face value; they refused to see it as a sincere attempt to find a middle ground.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the overture came at an inopportune moment, for by 1908, the SP's moderate elements were consolidating their control over the national party apparatus and could not have been less interested in strengthening the ranks of their own "impossibilists," as would result from a merger of the SP with a small, but vocal and obdurately revolutionary band led by a man of DeLeon's caliber. A year after the SLP's National Executive Committee had passed its unity resolution, DeLeon had to admit to that body that:

The hopes, entertained by the Socialist Labor Party of coupling to the general agitational facilities of the Socialist party the required educational qualities of the Socialist Labor Party, and thereby impart completion, and thus roundness, to the Movement in America, having been dashed, there is nothing left but to continue the arduous task of a double struggle—the struggle against capitalism and the struggle against . . . [the Socialist] party.<sup>36</sup>

DeLeon was understandably bitter at the rebuke. By the autumn of 1909 he was reveling vengefully in the SP's internal wrangles. In private correspondence to an SLP comrade concerning the rival party's



troubles, he wrote: "the development (or decomposition) now taking place in its ranks is logical to a tittle . . . All along the line, the thing is meeting its fate. And, indeed, I bubble over with joy. The logic of events is simply inspiring. It is as good to me as two months' vacation." At the same time, he consoled himself with the thought that the "propaganda organization must needs be small at this stage" and concluded that "we shall have to raise ourselves by our own bootstraps." "More and more," he confided, "I admire the Lassallean words: 'Petrus, upon this rock (the Proletaire) shall I build.'"<sup>37</sup>

Yet, despite the disappointment, DeLeon did not entirely abandon his quest to "impart completion" and "roundness" to the American movement. When, at the 1910 Copenhagen Congress of the Socialist International, another unity measure was introduced, DeLeon rose and declared himself "in loyal accord, without mental reservation of the proposed resolution." But noting that the delegates of the Socialist Party applauded the introduction of the proposal, as they had applauded and voted in favor of the similar one passed in Amsterdam some six years earlier, he wondered aloud why, in 1908, when "the S.L.P., although the smaller party, set pride aside, and . . . tendered unity to the S.P. . . . , the tender was rejected." He thereupon challenged the Socialist delegation to "let this Congress know whether that party's applause for, and support of, the resolution before us are merely Platonic demonstrations covering mental reservations." "For my Party," he promised, "I here state that, by January, we shall have a committee, elected by the Party, ready to confer with a similar committee from the S.P. to carry out this resolution. I call upon the S.P. to let this Congress know what it is to expect from the S.P." Morris Hillquit, replying for the Socialists and expressing their complete lack of desire for a working relationship with the DeLeonites, disingenuously welcomed the SLP "with open arms" on the condition that it desist from "its harmful I.W.W. whims against the [A.F.L.] unions," something he knew very well that it would not do and that the declared International policy on unionism did not oblige it to do. Undeterred by Hillquit's conspicuous indifference, the SLP persisted and a year later forwarded to the Bureau, the executive of the Socialist International, a "Unity Memorial" elaborating its position and spelling out its plan for achieving unity.<sup>38</sup> In the text of the Amsterdam unity resolution, and undoubtedly in those of its successors, the Bureau was offered to facilitate negotiations, and DeLeon now availed himself of its coopera-

tion.<sup>39</sup> But it was an exercise in futility. The leaders of the Socialist Party had their own method for gaining unity in the American movement, and it consisted of defining the SLP out of existence. Announcing that the SLP was "dead," they sought repeatedly between 1908 and 1910 to have that fact registered by claiming for themselves the SLP's seat on the International Bureau.<sup>40</sup> The current of ill-feeling between the SP and the SLP simply ran too deep.

Thus ended DeLeon's most far-reaching and ambitious attempt to expand the perimeter of his narrow beachhead in the direction of reform. It had come to naught and had left him hopelessly isolated—fated, in the image of Ahasuerus, to wander beyond the pale of a vital labor politics in America. Reconciling community and protocommunity had proven itself an insoluble problem.

## 7 *The New Trade Unionism*

While DeLeon only gradually and hesitantly came to terms with the need to accommodate reformist tendencies in the political realm, he had from the first understood that a party of socialism could not stand apart from the immediate demand-oriented proletarian organizations in the industrial realm—the trade unions. For “the spirit of union-formation,” he observed, “is an instinctive one,” like “the instinctive motion of the man who raises his arm to protect his head when assailed.” Accordingly, he appreciated that unions, however primitive or corrupt they might often reveal themselves to be, were natural phenomena, “bound to appear, and re-appear, and keep on re-appearing,” and as such would have to be treated by the socialist movement as permanent features on the map of the class struggle. “A Socialist party cannot play ostrich on the economic or trades union question,” DeLeon warned. “If it is a party of Socialism, it is a party of Labor. In a party of Socialism the trades union is latent. It cannot be ignored. It will not ignore you . . . There is no such thing as a political party of Labor ‘having nothing to do with the Unions.’ ” Hence, he concluded, a “party that calls itself Socialist and does ignore the Union, either is sincere, and then breaks its own back; or it is fraudulent, and then it must have its back broken.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, shortly after entering the Socialist Labor Party, DeLeon settled an old argument within the Party between Lassalleans, who favored an emphasis on political action, and Marxists, who wished to stress trade-union work. He succeeded in convincing the disputants that the Party should press forward simultaneously on both fronts, and the tactical synthesis was thereafter a constant in Party policy and

in DeLeon's own endeavors as a theoretician and activist. Though he would declare at one point, when his coordinated political-economic approach came under fire within the Industrial Workers of the World, that "the S.L.P. will hail any 'means' that will stand the test of reason and experience, and would give justifiable promise of reaching the goal more swiftly than the means of combined political and economic action," he never found an alternative worthy of endorsement.<sup>2</sup> Committed, therefore, to the principle of attacking capitalism both at the ballot box and in the shop, DeLeon, during his twenty years of direct participation in the affairs of labor organizations, asked and attempted to answer the question of how the two facets of the labor movement could best be related.

His first experience with the economic side of the struggle had come in the Knights of Labor. The Knights, founded a few years after the Civil War and having many of the trappings of a fraternal order, was, as stated earlier, not a true labor union in the modern sense. It had begun as a small secret society, advocating an abstract "labor solidarity" and protesting generally against monopoly and the loss of the workingmen's dignity and independence to the "wages system." Actively recruiting a large and extremely varied base of adherents, however, including professionals, small businessmen, well-to-do reformers, women, the unskilled, blacks, and immigrants, the Order, its appeal enhanced by the frequently chaotic state of the economy in the seventies and eighties, spread rapidly and in its peak year of 1886 could boast a membership exceeding seven hundred thousand. Yet the Knights' undigested social diversity and inchoateness of purpose pulled the organization in several directions at once and disabled it as an effective counter to the ever-growing power of consolidated capital. Under the Order's auspices a rhapsodic welter of dissimilar and sometimes contradictory approaches and tactics flourished: strikes, boycotts, arbitration, cooperative ventures, reform politics, benefit schemes, crusading exhortation—all found their exponents beneath the broad umbrella of the Knights of Labor.

Derivative, moreover, of a broad, humanitarian reform tradition dating back to the days of the Jacksonian labor movement and suffused with preindustrial values, the K. of L. was not well equipped, structurally or philosophically, to meet the class enemy in the contemporary arena of economic combat. It was rigidly centralized, its national officers were empowered with decisive authority, and it was

subdivided on a geographical basis, its constituent bodies being district and local "assemblies," which were frequently composed of people from a multiplicity of trades and often included nonworkers as well. The difficulties such a structure presented for effective strike action were compounded by the national leadership's disapproval of this primary weapon in labor's arsenal, and the consequent refusal of the Order's chief officers to provide funds and moral support for its deployment. True, the Order made concessions to the genuine trade-unionists among its number by permitting the establishment of "national trade districts," in effect, bona fide unions, which fought quite a few strikes. Nevertheless, tension between the unionists, with their principally bread-and-butter concerns, and the reform-minded, non-working-class types who dominated the K. of L. was never absent, and after 1886 the Order rapidly lost ground to the newly formed American Federation of Labor, never again to enjoy the preeminent position it had previously held in the eyes of American workers.<sup>3</sup>

DeLeon joined the K. of L. in 1888, becoming a member of "mixed" Local Assembly 1563 in New York, which, though called the "Excelsior Labor Club," had more parlor radicals and tradeless intellectuals on its roster than actual wage-workers. In 1891, by now an important figure in the SLP, DeLeon, with L. A. 1563 as a starting point, began a campaign to infuse the faltering Knights with the leaven of socialism. The AFL having proved resistant to socialist influence at its convention the preceding year, the Party turned its attention to the older labor body, whose centralized structure was not unlike that of the Party itself and which therefore seemed to offer the promise of socialist control in the near future if Party men applied themselves with sufficient determination and discipline. Without much difficulty, DeLeon managed to get himself elected as the Excelsior Club's delegate to pivotal District Assembly 49 in that year, the local's first socialist representative. Once operating at the district level, DeLeon took command of D. A. 49's socialist contingent, and under his leadership the socialists were strong enough by 1893 to prevent candidates from the major parties from being chosen district officers and to have their comrades, DeLeon at their head, serving in the district's delegation to the General Assembly, the Knights' national convention. During 1893 and 1894, the socialists consolidated their hold on the district, DeLeon inducing socialist-inclined garment-worker unions affiliated with the United Hebrew Trades to join D. A. 49 and add their delegate strength

to that of the socialist locals already represented. Early in 1895, the district demonstrated that it was firmly in the socialist camp by electing a slate of SLP men as district officers.<sup>4</sup>

From an increasingly secure district base, DeLeon attempted to move the Knights nationally in the direction of socialism. At the General Assembly of 1893, he aided the supporters of James R. Sovereign in deposing the veteran Grand Master Workman, Terence V. Powderly, putting Sovereign in Powderly's place as the Order's top officer. And at the General Assembly the following year, DeLeon's small bloc of socialists gave Sovereign the margin of victory in a closely contested campaign that saw Powderly make a serious comeback effort. However, after Sovereign's close call in 1894, the alliance between himself and DeLeon fell apart amid feuding and recriminations, and when DeLeon and his D. A. 49 delegation tried to take their seats on the convention floor at the General Assembly of 1895, their credentials were rejected by the Sovereign-dominated assemblage, ending DeLeon's K. of L. venture.<sup>5</sup>

Upon analyzing DeLeon's work in the Knights it becomes clear that although he considered the political and economic struggles of the working class to be integrally related, in fact two sides of the same coin, he also perceived them to be qualitatively different, calling for different standards of behavior, different tactics, and different applications of principle. The distinction DeLeon drew was more tacit than explicit at this juncture, but it was nonetheless significant, bringing to mind once again the larger dilemma he faced in properly balancing the community and protocommunity functions of the socialist movement. The proletarian economic organization was a natural area of expansion for the party, but its milieu was quite unlike the party's: its rank and file were by and large innocent of a true understanding of the class struggle, and it thus provided a favorable environment for the machinations of the "fakir" and the political charlatan, with whose power socialists would have to reckon in a manner other than would be appropriate within the political movement—practically, rather than ideologically—if any progress were to be made. Because DeLeon's awareness of the action required in the economic struggle was, in these years, more instinctive than intellectual, he was prone to inconsistency, perhaps hypocrisy, in pursuing his objectives within the K. of L. To say the least, when his behavior is examined in light of his own pronouncements and official SLP policy, the result plays havoc with the simon-pure, doctrinaire image of him that has come down through

the pages of so many accounts and histories. The man who was the scourge of reformism and the avenging angel of revolution within the Party cast a somewhat different shadow in the Knights of Labor.

Writing in 1893, when his drive to bring the Order into the socialist fold was well underway, DeLeon reported that "one of the leading endeavors of American Socialists has been to promote the New Trade Unionism, which, *in aims and methods*, is *at one with* and *inseparable from* the Socialist Labor Party."<sup>6</sup> This, taken together with his condemnation of reform, his warnings regarding cooperation with the non-working-class elements that often propounded it, and the official line he convinced the Party to adopt on the subject, would have led one to expect his "boring from within" strategy to have been characterized by a posture of unmitigated hostility to political "freaks and frauds" and "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," and by the forthright, unvarnished preachment of socialism. There would have been no compromises and "deals," no coalitions with nonproletarian groups, and no truck with reformers. But, on the contrary, pragmatism and shrewd political calculation, violating the spirit and the letter of his teachings and of Party doctrine up to that point, animated DeLeon's work in the Knights. As far as tactics were concerned, there was, it seems, little to distinguish the "New Trade Unionism" from the old.

DeLeon's K. of L. period gets its opportunistic hue primarily from his alliances of expediency with Populists in the Order. As was demonstrated in the preceding chapter, DeLeon considered Populism a malignancy on the body politic whose entreaties for cooperation would be shunned by any right-thinking socialist. Nevertheless, until 1894 he found it to his advantage to make common cause with People's Party adherents in D. A. 49, in order to counter the strivings of major party candidates for district office. He therefore supported the successful People's Party slate in the district elections of 1893. DeLeon sensed that such "politicking" would not go down well with the SLP rank and file, especially those sections and comrades who were being editorially excoriated by him and who were feeling the lash of Party censure for their contributions to Labor-Populist fusion tickets. Consequently, socialist activities in the K. of L. were not reported in the *People* until D. A. 49 was under Socialist-Populist control and the potentially negative impact could be tempered by presenting the story as one of achievement.<sup>7</sup>

The coalition strategy carried over into DeLeon's efforts as a Gen-

eral Assembly delegate, when, in 1893, he backed Sovereign's sustained challenge to the ruling Powderly faction. He hailed Sovereign's triumph as one that "sounded the opening of a new era" for the Knights,<sup>8</sup> but nothing about the new Grand Master Workman and his cohorts lent credence to such an appraisal. Both Powderly and Sovereign were avowed Populist sympathizers and thus, on political grounds, should have been equally unpalatable to DeLeon. Moreover, the past record of the insurgents did not suggest any important differences with Powderly on the administration or policies of the Order; they had all previously supported him and had amicably served him in lesser offices. DeLeon himself had not criticized Powderly publicly before the General Assembly met, and the Grand Master Workman had no prior inkling that the D. A. 49 delegate would oppose his reelection, as was indicated by his praise of the socialist leader in the Knights' official journal shortly before the General Assembly opened.

The defeat of Powderly was not an epoch-making event pointing a new direction for the Order, but rather a palace rebellion motivated by the personal ambition of the Sovereign clique; this interpretation is confirmed by the fact that no major change in practice or policy occurred during Sovereign's tenure.<sup>9</sup> DeLeon, who would in the end be no more pleased with Sovereign than he had been with his predecessor, had apparently hoped to exploit this fissure at the higher levels to improve the socialists' position in the Order. There being no ideological reasons to choose one set of aspirants over the other, and a separate socialist campaign evidently being ruled out as a futile gesture, DeLeon probably decided to cast his lot with the Sovereign forces in an effort to break the deeply entrenched Powderly group's hold on the Knights, thereby creating a fluid situation that would enlarge his field of maneuver.

After the 1893 General Assembly, DeLeon developed his ties to the Knights' new administration. The organization was now given a fabricated history in the *People* to rationalize the increasing surface coziness between the Party and the Knights' leadership: the K. of L. was described as having been from its inception a body with socialist inclinations, which were stifled only when miscreants like Powderly held sway. Ignoring the Grand Master Workman's Populistic professions, DeLeon wrote editorials during 1894 that depicted Sovereign as working for socialism, an illusion the latter found useful to foster when he visited the D. A. 49 Socialist stronghold toward the end of that year.<sup>10</sup>



The high point in this marriage of convenience came at the General Assembly of 1894, where Sovereign was hard-pressed to stave off a return to power by Powderly. Needing the socialist votes controlled by DeLeon at the convention, Sovereign resorted to the time-honored technique of practical politicians, the quid pro quo. DeLeon delivered the votes on Sovereign's promise to appoint Lucien Sanial, an SLP leader, editor of the Knights' organ. DeLeon was later surprisingly candid about his reasons for insuring Sovereign's reelection. He readily conceded that Sovereign had been the thrall of "ignorance," that he and his fellow officers had been the purveyors of "blundering political economy and false sociology," that he had "hardly ever opened his mouth in public without putting his foot into it," and that the socialist delegates could not, therefore, have voted for him on his merits. Hence, DeLeon explained, "The final decision arrived at was that, there being danger of the old Powderly gang coming in, we were bound to support the administration, but that, this danger notwithstanding, we could not assume the responsibility of re-electing the General Officers unless they pledged themselves to allow the delegation of D.A. 49 to nominate the editor of the *Journal*, and in that way turn the paper from the absurdity that it was in to [sic] a source of enlightenment to the workers." At a meeting called between the socialists and the general officers, DeLeon continued,

We stated our demands, conditioning our support of all the General Officers upon a pledge to place the control of the *Journal* in our hands . . . The following day, speaking for all the General Officers, James R. Sovereign gave us the pledge; we supported all the General Officers, and before leaving New Orleans [the site of the G.A.] I placed in the hands of Mr. Sovereign a written application, signed by all the 8 [socialist delegates], recommending Brother Lucien Sanial of L.A. 1563 as editor of the *Journal*. Mr. Sovereign informed me the transfer would be made by the 1st of the following January, and I so notified Brother Sanial.

At the time, however, DeLeon was not so frank with his readers. Without mentioning the bargain in his commentary on the New Orleans General Assembly, he put the Sovereign victory on a much loftier plane: "This year the work of purification was continued, and successfully brought to a conclusion. [The G.A.] . . . ruthlessly lopped off elements that were a block and hindrance to progress. It had no use

for 'pure and simpledom.' It planted itself unmistakeably [sic] upon the high plane of new trade unionism."<sup>11</sup>

DeLeon's jubilation over the breakthrough he thought he had scored in his deal with Sovereign turned to wrath when the agreed-upon date of Sanial's appointment passed without any action forthcoming from the General Executive Board. DeLeon's inquiries were met with lame excuses, and it soon became clear that Sovereign was reneging on his promise. At this point the gloves came off and all pretenses about the Grand Master Workman's supposedly socialist tendencies were cast to the wind. DeLeon began hammering at Sovereign in the *People* and now did not hesitate to pillory him as the enthusiast for Populist monetary panaceas that he had been all along. The *Journal of the Knights of Labor* sent answering barrages, and the result was a full-scale press war that raged on for the better part of 1895, preparing the ground for a battle royal at the autumn meeting of the General Assembly. Naturally anticipating serious trouble with the D. A. 49 contingent, the general officers manipulated the organizational machinery in the weeks preceding the convention to impugn the validity of the credentials issued by D.A. 49 to its all-socialist delegation. When the DeLeonites arrived, their credentials were rejected by convention authorities whose decision was subsequently upheld by a narrow margin on the floor. The socialists promptly went home to New York and repudiated the Order, with the general officers soon after returning the favor by formally expelling them. DeLeon's bitterness over the double-cross could not be contained; it heavily laced a brief review he gave of the Order's history in a speech shortly after the final debacle. The Order "sank into the mire," he said. "Ignoramuses took hold of the organization; a million and a half men went into it, hoping for salvation; but, instead of salvation, there came from the veils of the K. of L. Local, District and General Assemblies the developed ignoramuses, that is to say, the Labor Fakirs, riding the workingman and selling him out to the exploiter. Disappointed, the masses fell off."<sup>12</sup>

Through his prerogatives, then, as Grand Master Workman, Sovereign, the premier "ignoramus," managed to avoid paying his political debts and at the same time headed off further socialist inroads into his shrinking fiefdom. The humiliating experience made a profound impression on DeLeon, one which would govern his thinking about unions for the remainder of his career.

The moral of the Knights episode, he concluded, was that the tradi-

tional socialist strategy of "boring from within" established labor organizations was bound to fail and had to be junked. It was essential to work in the economic organizations of the proletariat, but such work was impossible in bodies under the thumb of the "fakir." The only logical alternative was to build a new union federation strictly according to the specifications of the "New Trade Unionism" and under the watchful eye of the political movement. As DeLeon put it:

Though to strand on the sands of disgrace the wreck that is left of the Order is in itself good work, the work of reconstruction must follow, else that of destruction is fruitless. The A.F. of L. has become the football of . . . political crooks. Its fate and that of the Order is the fate that ever awaits pure and simplicity. The workers will no longer see-saw backwards and forwards from the Knights to the Federation, and back again. The two have now become a stench in the nostrils of the American proletariat. They have been the buffers of capitalism against which every move of progressive organization has spent its forces. Let us re-organize upon that higher plane that sooner or later the labor organizations are to take[,] the plane of identity of economical and political efforts, consolidated, inspired, guided and purified by the class consciousness of the wage-slave, who, having nothing to lose but his chains and a world to win, is ready to devote himself to nothing less than to his complete emancipation, in the unflagging and unterrified pursuit of which no chance can be given for the labor barnacle to fasten upon, sell him out and nullify his efforts.

Answering the call to arms, socialist trade unionists met in December 1895 and organized the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, which soon after received the endorsement of the Socialist Labor Party.<sup>13</sup> This institutional scion of the theory of New Trade Unionism, as implied in DeLeon's above-quoted peroration, was definitely designed as an instrument for "dauntless struggle" against the older, "fakir"-dominated labor organizations on their own turf. The STLA was to be a "battering ram" to "breach" the "solid wall of ignorant, stupid and corrupt labor fakirs" that kept "the broad masses of the American proletariat" from hearing the socialist "message." The disagreement between the socialists and the "pure-and-simplers" in the labor movement was fundamental, DeLeon believed, and the established union federations and the socialist trade unionists could only meet on the

field of battle. To declare for a class-conscious unionism was unavoidably, in his view, to declare war on organized labor as it was then constituted. "You cannot establish a national organization like the S.T. & L.A.," he pointed out, "and have the A.F. of L. and the K. of L., or what there is left of it, imagine that that means friendship." DeLeon conceived the conflict to be a sector of the general class struggle between labor and capital, the STLA representing the working class and the K. of L. and AFL dancing on strings held by the capitalist class and secured by faithful and pliant "labor lieutenants" garbed in the livery of that class. Reflecting this perception of the nature of the contest, and of the STLA as an economic counterpart to the fortress party, was DeLeon's use of martial imagery to describe the purposes of institutionalized New Trade Unionism: "We combat these pure and simple organizations, and expect to make them surrender . . . Others . . . will have to be taken by storm. These pure and simple organizations are forts in the hands of the capitalist class, because these forts are held by the labor lieutenants of the capitalists. These forts must be captured; they cannot be wheedled into line for the working class."<sup>14</sup>

The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, therefore, was quite deliberately created as a rival union formation and consequently appeared to show insouciant disregard for one of the commandments of organized labor's decalogue, that against "dual unionism." DeLeon's enemies both within and without the socialist movement made much of this, and it became one of the major sources of controversy in the Socialist Labor Party, contributing materially to the split of 1899.<sup>15</sup> Seen in the context of its time, however, even conceding the wisdom of the orthodox proscription against setting up competing bodies in a trade where a union already existed, the STLA was not really the grievous sin against labor solidarity that it was often charged to be. For one thing, organized labor in the 1890s was still in its infancy, and the vast majority of American workers were untouched by it. The Knights of Labor could claim a membership of but seventeen thousand after the socialists withdrew from it, and the AFL, with more than a quarter of a million enrollees, still barely scratched the proletarian surface. Hence, there was not a great deal to be "dual" in relation to. Also, rival unionism was hardly unprecedented, nor was it the exclusive preserve of DeLeonites. Samuel Gompers, for example, whose criticism of DeLeon's dual unionist experiment was probably the most vehement, had himself been involved in organizing no less than four

rival trade bodies prior to his emergence as the leading champion of established unionism. Moreover, owing to the small size and competitive character of the workers' economic movement, the labor scene was constantly in flux and territorial claims were not always sustained. Joseph Schlossberg, a pioneer figure in the organization of the needle trades, corroborated this and advised that in judging DeLeon:

One must be acquainted with the logic of the situation at that time. The 'American Federation of Labor' arose in [the] Eighties in opposition to the older 'Knights of Labor.' During the Nineties the 'Knights' were on the decline. The 'Federation' sapped the strength of the 'Knights,' though it was not well established. Unions shifted from one organization to another. Some unions belonged to both. Others, belonged to neither. The building of an opposition union did not appear then as appalling as it does now. The fact that the 'Federation' triumphed over the 'Knights,' made it possible for an opposition to both also to be successful.<sup>16</sup>

It should also be noted that, as DeLeon hedged on his blanket condemnation of reform, as he shrunk from completely writing off the Populist movement, and as he would later search for "solid sediment" in the Socialist Party, he was no nihilist with respect to the older unions. He never encouraged his followers to smash unions solely because they were not socialist-led. Singled out for destruction, rather, was the irredeemable union "entirely in the hands of . . . a labor lieutenant of capital," one in which "its membership is grown so fast to him and he to them, that the one cannot be shaken from the other." Such an organization was not to be accorded the status of a genuine body of workers. It was a "caricature," a blind for capitalist chicanery "deserv[ing] no quarter at the Socialist's hands." Therefore, to raze the rotten structure of an Augean stable masquerading as a bona fide union was not union-busting. DeLeon steadfastly maintained that: "Such an organization is no more a labor organization than is the army of the Czar of Russia, which, though composed wholly of workingmen, is officered by the exploiting class. In such a case the Socialist must endeavor to set up a bona-fide Labor trades union and to do what he can to smash the fraud. The Labor cannon that one day will surely decimate the Czar's army, and defeat it, will bring redemption even to the workingmen in that army, although many of them may be killed by it." As to those unions which had not descended to that abysmal level, DeLeon urged another, more moderate course, a modified

form of "boring from within."<sup>17</sup> Answering a reader who inquired on the subject, he instructed that:

What to do in each case is to be determined by circumstances.

If the pure and simple organization, among which the Alliance has acquired a sufficiency of members, is run by men, who, however uninformed, do not act corruptly, and which, on the whole, justifies the belief that it can be leavened upward; the Alliance men should stay there, and even try to draw into it as many more members of the trade as they can. Such an organization should not be fought; education will be enough in that case.<sup>18</sup>

The ultimate objective here, he later explained, would be to "wheel it into line with the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance." And, DeLeon affirmed, "In any conflict between the workingman and the capitalist, (whether the workingman is within the Alliance or disorganized entirely on the outside, or organized in the pure and simple Union), if there is a real conflict, the Alliance stands by those men, regardless of the organization."<sup>19</sup>

DeLeon's policy toward the old-line unions was not as radical a departure from past practice as he and his labor movement contemporaries imagined, which further suggests that there was not much about the New Trade Unionism that was terribly novel. The suspicion is confirmed by a closer look at the structure, the inner workings, and the activities of the STLA. Such scrutiny reveals that, far from being the progenitor of the revolutionary industrial unionism of the IWW, as DeLeon would afterward claim and as a number of subsequent interpreters have stated, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance can be more accurately categorized as the last example of nineteenth-century reform unionism, the end of a line of descent on the political reform side of the historic bifurcation between reform and pragmatic unionism in the United States. The Alliance began as the socialist rump of the Knights of Labor, and it remained just that during its brief life, far truer to its K. of L. origins than its members realized. All of which points to the conclusion that even if DeLeon's gambit in the Knights had been successful, the history of the New Trade Unionism would not have been greatly altered nor would the decline of the obsolescent Order have been arrested.<sup>20</sup>

The structure of the Alliance was modeled directly on that of the fast-expiring Knights. Like the Order, it was a highly centralized body under the administration of a national officer and a general executive

board, with officers retaining quaint, fraternal-order titles like "master workman." It carried over the antiquated system of geographical subdivisions—the local and district assemblies—merely changing their designations from "assembly" to "alliance," and it chartered many "mixed" alliances containing men who did not share a common trade or who were not workingmen at all. And despite an oft-repeated supposition in the historical literature, the Alliance's trade locals and districts were not organized on an industrial basis but rather on traditional craft lines, as in the K. of L. and the AFL.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the industrial principle was so distant from the thoughts of the Alliance's leaders that affiliates with narrowly delimited craft jurisdictions, such as the German Waiters' Union<sup>22</sup> and the Progressive Rolled Cigarette Makers' Union,<sup>23</sup> could be tendered charters. The nonindustrialism of the STLA was further reflected in its failure to target its efforts on the unskilled workers in the mass manufacturing, processing, and extractive industries, the logical constituency for industrial unionism and the focus of the later work of the IWW and the CIO.<sup>24</sup>

DeLeon, then, as the STLA's theoretician and moving spirit, presided over an organization faced with the same dilemma as the K. of L. from whence it issued: how to mediate between the divergent tendencies of social change and incipient business unionism, between ultimate goals and the immediate needs and demands of the workingman. The problem was basically the same as that in the political sphere—balancing reform and revolution, reconciling community and proto-community. DeLeon, treading in the footsteps of the reform-minded Knights' leaders, recognized the inevitable and for the moment made his peace with the short-range, pragmatic purposes of conventional craft unionism, a type of concession toward reform he would make in the political realm only tacitly and desultorily or when faced with the alternative of complete isolation, as in 1908. He considered those socialists not willing to do so to be committing "a serious error." For: "By thus giving over all participation in the industrial movement, they wholly disconnect themselves from the class struggle that is going on every day; and by putting off their whole activity to a single day in the year—election day, they become floaters in the air." This judgment followed from the awareness that victory on the political field was not likely in the near future and that socialists would have to offer something to the workers in the interim in order to demonstrate that socialists were not oblivious to their present suffering. DeLeon admitted that:

*The conquest of the public powers by the Socialist Labor Party is an impossibility over-night . . . In the meantime what shall be done? Something is wanted NOW. Some economic relief is demanded now. The political organization . . . can only come into play occasionally. The workingmen need something else besides. They need an organization that may give some relief, however temporary. No intelligent physician will attend a serious sickness, overlooking entirely the palliatives that he might give his patient. However much an economic organization may give palliatives only, however entirely those things may be palliatives, they are something: it is a relief, and the workingmen need it, and need it badly. Now then, the only organization that can give that temporary relief is the economic organization: the Trade Union.*<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the Alliance, DeLeon said, addressed itself to the standard work of the legitimate trade union—organizing the unorganized. The pure-and-simple aggregations had proven themselves unworthy of this endeavor. They were headed chiefly by corrupt men whose fealty went to the bosses instead of the ranks, and the unorganized, often having “made sad experience with these organizations,” “hav[ing] burned their fingers there enough,” would stay away from them. In addition, pure-and-simplesdom, DeLeon told an audience of strikers in 1898, had shown itself capable merely of securing “lower wages” for its men. But, he asserted, “New Trades Unionism,” on the contrary, “not only wishes to do something now for the workers, but it knows that the thing can be done, and how to do it.” Presumably, socialist leadership would remedy the problem of malfeasance at the top and insure that the rank and file would not be manipulated at the command and for the benefit of the employers. DeLeon, however, also left the tantalizing impression here, given the context of his remark, that a New Trade Union could promise better wages too, though he declined to spell out how, exactly, or why that would be the case. The reason he didn’t is that he firmly believed just the opposite: that no organization operating in the economic realm per se, regardless of the honesty and dedication of its leadership, could accomplish more than “break the force of the onslaught of the capitalist” and that, accordingly, “there is not to be expected hope from a purely economic organization.” Hence, he was not entirely straightforward in hinting that a union belonging to the STLA could achieve gains in the economic arena that a pure-and-simple union could not. “The actual raising of wages,” he subsequently admitted, was simply “an ideal,” one that



"can not be enjoyed in the long run." A realistic goal, the "'next best' thing," was "the preventing of wages from dropping to the point that they inevitably would in the total absence of organization," to "the coolie stage" that "long ago would . . . have [been] reached" had "the union . . . not [been] act[ing] as a brake on the decline." And, DeLeon stated, "That the trades union, even the pure-and-simplest, does that is not open to discussion." If, in theory, there was no real difference between the capacity of the pure-and-simple union and that of the New Trade Union to win wage demands, the only remaining distinguishing feature was that the latter would not fall prey to the labor fakir. Yet, as indicated above, DeLeon accepted the possibility that pure-and-simple unions could generate decent leaders, and, as will be shown, was soon disabused of the idea that the STLA was incapable of producing its own crop of evildoers. The newness of the New Trade Unionism was, then, even to its most articulate exponent, a recondite and elusive property. Such was revealed with particular force when DeLeon attempted to establish a rule of thumb for the setting of objectives by socialist trade unions. In its obscurity it could scarcely have been less helpful as a practical guide to action. He advised:

Steps in the right direction, so-called 'immediate demands,' are among the most precarious. They are precarious because they are subject and prone to the lure of the 'sop' or the 'palliative' that the foes of Labor's redemption are ever ready to dangle before the eyes of the working class, and at which, aided by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, the unwary are apt to snap—and be hooked. But there is a test by which the bait can be distinguished from the sound step, by which the trap can be detected and avoided, and yet the right step forward taken. That test is this: DOES THE CONTEMPLATED STEP SQUARE WITH THE ULTIMATE AIM? If it does, then the step is sound and safe; if it does not, then the step is a trap and disastrous. The 'immediate step' that acts like a brake on the decline of wages belongs to the former category, provided only the nature of the brake is not such that it inevitably invites a future decline, that requires a further brake and which brake only invites some later decline, and so on, towards a catastrophe or towards final cooledom. We have seen that the pure and simple trades union belongs to the latter category of 'traps.'<sup>26</sup>

Considering the opaqueness of such advice, it is not surprising that Alliance affiliates traveled the well-rutted methodological road of tra-

ditional trade unionism. Here, again, the inconsistency seemingly endemic to the New Trade Unionism became starkly evident. DeLeon, harboring in common with the reformist top-echelon of the Knights of Labor an ill-concealed distaste for the general purposes of "pragmatic" unionism vis-à-vis broader political objectives, shared also the Order's leadership's abiding skepticism toward the value of trade-union methods. Organized labor's standby, the strike, DeLeon had, by 1892, already dismissed as a primitive, hopelessly outdated form of rebellion, a blunderbuss in the age of the Gatling gun; a later editorial on the subject, which bore the title, "Ineffectual Weapons—the Strike," clearly evidenced his continuing lack of faith in the tactic. And the boycott, the other principal device to which labor normally resorted to effect its demands, was similarly belittled under the head, "Pure and Simple Weapons." However, in the context of the Alliance a different tune was heard. There, DeLeon had no problem with the notion that "we can win economic battles," and he could assure listeners "that the economic weapons are of no value only when in the hands of ignorant fakirs."<sup>27</sup>

Neither outright obliqueness nor the bestriding of a contradiction, though, was a comfortable pose for DeLeon, and he at times sought to assuage, perhaps, the attendant unease he felt by shifting attention from the pure-and-simple tactics themselves to the underlying revolutionary spirit he believed them to express. When the rank and file "wanted something," he divined, it was the throbbing of a "revolutionary pulse," and the "demand [for] higher wages and better times" was likewise seen by him to be the reflection of "a revolutionary impulse." In the same vein, when addressing striking textile workers in 1898, DeLeon told his auditors that he could overlook "your persistent errors in fundamental principles, in aims and methods, . . . the illusions that you are chasing after," because "despite all that you preserve manhood enough not to submit to oppression, but rise in the rebellion that is implied in a strike." He went on to assert: "The attitude of workingmen engaged in a bona fide strike is an inspiring one. It is an earnest that slavery will not prevail. The slave alone who will not rise against his master, who will meekly bend his back to the lash and turn his cheek to him who plucks his beard—that slave alone is hopeless. But the slave, who . . . persists, despite failures and poverty, in rebelling, there is always hope for."<sup>28</sup>

Be that as it may, no matter how much DeLeon strove to put the

best possible revolutionary face on the pressure techniques to which labor customarily repaired for self-protection, the fact remains that he never satisfactorily resolved the opposite stands he had taken on the question. In consequence, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance occupied itself primarily with the same activities that enlisted the energies of nonsocialist trade organizations. Its meetings, the deliberations of which were duly reported in the *People*, were devoted largely to strikes and boycotts.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, it scored one notable success in a strike of four thousand steel workers in Pittsburgh, and DeLeon was editorially exultant about it although the achievement tended to belie that more widely disseminated part of his teachings which held strikes to be futile. And once moving in the orbit of conventional trade unionism, the Alliance found itself involved with other accouterments of pure-and-simplicity, including settlements with the class enemy ratified by contract, card transfer issues, and the union label.<sup>30</sup>

The only genuine difference between unions in the Alliance and those outside it could not be detected in a comparative examination of their respective actions in the economic sphere. It flowed, rather, from the heavy infusion of socialist political propaganda into the STLA, and the Alliance's consequent orientation to revolutionary politics. As far as DeLeon and his SLP associates were concerned, it mattered little that the day-to-day activities of the Alliance were often indistinguishable from those of pure-and-simple unions, so long as the Alliance fostered class consciousness and directed the attention of its membership beyond the mean skirmishes on the shop floor to the larger picture—the general war of the classes—of which the purely economic, trade-union aspect was but a theater, and by no means the most significant one. Hence, the sine qua non of a bona fide union was its political content: what a union believed about the future was far more critical than what it sought and how it conducted itself in the present.

A union untutored as to its place in the larger scheme of things, DeLeon maintained, would not rise above its primal nature as an instinctive reflex of self-defense, its "babe condition."

In the babe condition under which the union is born naturally, it has no conception of the nature of the weapon that it instinctively raises up its arm in self-defense against. In that natural and original babe condition the union does not realize that its members are merchandise in the present state of society; it does not realize the law that governs the value and price of merchandise; conse-

quently, it does not realize the law that underlies its own value and price, that is, its wages; it does not realize the cause of its degraded merchandise status; it does not realize that its lack of the natural (land) and social (capital) opportunities keep it down; accordingly it does not realize there is no improvement, let alone salvation, for it so long as it labors under the status of merchandise; finally and most important of all, and as a result of all, it does not understand that it cannot improve faster than the rest of the working class.

However, being "instructed upon the nature of the weapon of assault" would "save it from . . . the pure and simple quagmire . . . and develop [it] into the new trades union so hated of capitalism."<sup>31</sup>

The "new trades union," thus weaned from the "babe condition" and apprised of the commodity status it held in common with the rest of the working class, would adhere to what DeLeon called "the essential principles of sound organization," all of which pointed to class-conscious political action as the only means capable of redressing labor's plight:

1st—A trade organization must be clear upon the fact that not until it has overthrown the capitalist system of private ownership in the machinery of production, and made this the joint property of the people, thereby compelling every one to work if he wants to live, is it at all possible for the workers to be safe.

2nd—A labor organization must be perfectly clear upon the fact that it cannot reach safety until it has wrenched the Government from the clutches of the capitalist class; and that it cannot do that unless it votes, not for MEN but for PRINCIPLES, unless it votes into power its own class platform and programme: THE ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM OF SLAVERY.

3rd—A labor organization must be perfectly clear upon the fact that politics are not, like religion, a private concern, any more than the wages and the hours of a workingman are his private concern. For the same reason that his wages and hours are the concern of his class, so is his politics. Politics is not separable from wages. For the same reason that the organization of labor dictates wages, hours, etc., in the interest of the working class, for that same reason must it dictate politics also; and for the same reason that it execrates the scab in the shop, it must execrate the scab at the hustings.

"Obviously," DeLeon argued,

independent, class-conscious political action is the head of Labor's lance. Useful as any other weapon may be, that weapon is the determining factor. Entrenched in the public powers, the Capitalist Class command[s] the field, none but the political weapon can dislodge the usurpers and enthrone the Working Class . . . Obviously, in the interest of the Working Class, is it to arouse them to class-conscious political action.

And just as obviously this meant "joining and electing the American wing of the International Socialist party—the Socialist Labor party of America."<sup>32</sup>

If, on the other hand, the union were permitted to languish in its swaddling clothes, its political indolence would be seized upon by the capitalist class through its labor fakir henchmen and used against the workingman. In a political vacuum, the fakir, said DeLeon, "would, under ordinary circumstances, naturally be chosen by the rank and file to head their political outbreaks and . . . the Working Class would thereby unintentionally defeat their own honest and serious purposes," for "the Labor Leader would sell out." Capital, he reminded, was acutely aware of the danger posed by class-conscious proletarian politics and therefore "anxious to have the labor forces turned from the field of independent Labor political activity." Obedient to the ruling class, the fakir could be expected to oblige by "seek[ing] to turn the political trend of the Labor Movement into the channels of capitalist politics, where the head of Labor's lance, its independent, class-conscious political effort, can be safely broken off."<sup>33</sup> There was no middle ground: the union must either serve the interests of the workers or those of the class enemy.

Consequently, the New Trade Unionism defined the chief role of the union to be political. The relationship of the union and the party was conceived to be reciprocal, the former transmitting to the workbench the message of the future, the latter bolstering at the ballot box the necessarily defensive position in the present of the former vis-a-vis the employer. No hard-and-fast line was drawn between the two; they were separated only by a practical division of function determined by their respective temporal reference points. The arrangement allowed the union to "be a valuable fortification behind which to conduct the

daily class struggle in the shops," inasmuch as it was "protected once a year by the guns of an increasing class-conscious party of labor." DeLeon stressed that "the shop organization that combines in its warfare the annually recurring class-conscious ballot, can stem capitalist encroachment from day to day." But the key to the union's viability was that political nexus: "Shop organization alone, unbacked by that political force that threatens the capitalist class with extinction, the working class being the overwhelming majority [of the electorate], leaves the workers wholly unprotected."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, DeLeon placed a heavy emphasis on the thorough politicization of the economic organization; he ascribed to the union the need for a socialist benefactor external to its field of action; and he conceded, despite implications to the contrary, that no union, irrespective of its level of class consciousness, could by itself do more than slow the decline in wages. Together these facts indicate that there was more to his New Trade Unionism than meets the eye. There is the clear hint that the doctrine had a manipulative underside and that in expounding it, DeLeon was engaging in a bit of theoretic legerdemain. Reviewing the events and assumptions that created and sustained the STLA, it would seem that the real *raison d'être* of the Alliance was simply to serve as a staging area for the socialist vote.

As DeLeon had observed, workers naturally and irrepressibly gathered into unions, and it was therefore deemed appropriate and wise, indeed essential, for a party of labor to try to reach them there, the unions offering the added advantage of providing a year-round forum for propaganda that could otherwise only be aired to maximum effect during infrequent election campaigns. Initially, when this was attempted in the preexisting labor bodies, the socialists found themselves frustrated. They discovered, according to DeLeon, that these institutions had been captured by capitalist agents and turned into devices through which the capitalists could control and deflect proletarian discontent and even harness it for their own uses. The socialists then started their own union federation, the Alliance, which competed, principally on economic grounds, with the old-line unions for the workers' loyalty. Its spokesmen, DeLeon first among them, proclaimed that the New Trade Union could do a better job of safeguarding the workingman against despoliation in the shop. In fact, however, the STLA was probably never thought of as anything more than a counter-dissimulation—the socialist answer to the pure-and-simple

unionism whose basic purpose was to tie the workers to capitalist politics while pretending to serve their interests in the workplace. Such a judgment is warranted, because, as stated, the trade body in DeLeon's theory was actually intrinsically limited, confined by its very nature to the negligible function of retarding the decline in wages held inevitable under capitalism. As an inert factor, then, the economic organization could not make a positive, independent contribution to the revolutionary process. It could only be a satellite to the political party—more precisely, a conduit that would funnel into the political movement class-conscious sentiment generated in the give-and-take with the boss on the shop floor. Hence, it was of little concern to DeLeon that in the economic domain the Alliance occupied itself with the same trivialities that animated pure-and-simple unionism. Given the inherent incapacity of any union to alter substantially the oppressed condition of the proletariat, it was not realistic to expect the New Trade Union to do anything else. None but ineffectual methods, DeLeon must have presumed, could germinate and flourish in an environment that lent itself to no other. Therefore, the Alliance's forays into the strike and boycott field were tolerable, despite his own doubts about their value, as long as the STLA was at the same time building a social-list constituency.

This tolerance was encouraged by the perception that the exercise of trade-union methods could be exploited politically. DeLeon, apparently motivated by that perception, shrewdly if somewhat cynically assigned to the New Trade Union the paradoxical role of object lesson: it would lead workers into strikes and boycotts to show that the paraphernalia of trade unionism was a weak substitute for the class-conscious ballot. When, as anticipated, these actions were repulsed or in the end "succeeded" merely in whittling down the size of an announced wage cut, the socialist would be on hand to explain what was lacking and what had to be done to gain for the worker his rightful due. In this manner, the potentially revolutionary energies produced in the course of trade-union struggles would not be permitted to dissipate aimlessly, as in pure-and-simple unions, where despair, apathy, and induration to defeat and degradation—the abject harvest of the "apolitical" unionism DeLeon so deplored—were normally the results.

If the New Trade Unionism was an odd formulation, a poorly integrated melange of lofty ambition and callously mechanistic means, it was owing to the fact that the doctrine was constructed of grossly dis-

similar and ill-fitting components—the trade union, static and enclosed within a severely restricted ambit, and the dynamic, nearly omniscient revolutionary party. The trade union was obviously, at this juncture, a problematic factor for DeLeon, one that could not intelligently be ignored, but one that he found hard to incorporate into an overall theory of revolutionary change. He could now see it only as a limp appendage, dangling precariously from a revolutionary corpus with which it had little true affinity.<sup>35</sup>

This particular reading of DeLeon's trade-union doctrine is bolstered by certain facts about the STLA's operation and certain of DeLeon's statements about the Alliance's origins, goals, and methods. That the union was from the first, in his eyes, just a battlefield in the political war, simply a territory to be occupied and utilized by the victors, is easily discerned in his comments on the nature of the old-line unions and his review of the socialists' unsuccessful campaign to control them. This breed of union, he contended, had been an outworn, "a rotten thing," its real substance having been drawn out of it by a process of decomposition, but he noted that its "skeleton" remained and would endure and that it thus had to be fought for. Wildly mixing his metaphors, he likened the unions to "the seals in the Probyloff [*sic*] Islands."

The seal-catchers don't go out in pursuit of the seals. They know that at certain seasons the seals gather of themselves at certain spots. At such seasons the hunters are ready at the given places, club in hand; and, when the seals turn up, hit them over the head and capture them. So with the Organized Scabberies that remain in control of these skeletons of Trade Unions. They wait for the season when the workingmen . . . demand higher wages and better times. Then come these labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, and, with their capitalist clubs, hit this revolutionary movement over the head.

The capitalists, DeLeon pointed out, came to appreciate that unions were potentially perilous when the latter, "guided by a natural instinct," though "yet . . . an untutored instinct, . . . struck in the air," their "blows" falling "upon individual capitalists." Mindful of the incipient political significance of these rebellions, of the possibility that the workers' sophistication could grow to the point where their target would become capitalism *per se*, the capitalists hired themselves



some "seal-catchers," and, as DeLeon construed it, a fundamentally political conflict was joined for domination of the "skeleton." But, said DeLeon, "the Socialist movement being weak, the Socialists went under, and presently the Trade Union movement became in the country an engine of the capitalist."<sup>36</sup>

With the frontal assault of the outmanned socialists having been driven back and the political flag of the enemy now planted firmly on the terrain of the established trade-union movement, a flanking action was executed in the organization of the oppositionist STLA, which was to be the countervailing "engine" of the socialist. In keeping with the overarching political import DeLeon ascribed to unionism, the Alliance was frankly tailored to meet political rather than economic needs. It was a cone-shaped contrivance, broad and open at one end, narrow and pinched at the other, a form that befitted an instrument designed only to gather class-conscious feeling for the purpose of focusing it politically.

At its open end, the Alliance had a liberal admission policy like its estranged K. of L. parent had before it. Membership in the SLP or even a pledge to support the Party at the polls was not a prerequisite for joining, and STLA affiliates did in fact have non-Party men in their ranks. The idea, no doubt, was to attract workers who initially desired only to belong to an organization that could effectively pursue immediate economic objectives. Once enrolled, these men could be brought along gradually, their class consciousness nurtured by a thorough education in the class struggle. Even workers who had records of scabbing were not to be excluded, DeLeon evidently having faith that they could be redeemed in the proselytizing ambience of the New Trade Unionism. On the question of organizing the previously errant, DeLeon, far more concerned about future political behavior than past economic misadventure, waxed forgiving and magnanimous. "I draw the distinction," he said, "between a scab who becomes a scab for want, who becomes a scab through hunger, and the man who is born a scab." Even the latter type of proletarian outlaw, however, was not, in DeLeon's view, permanently tainted by his misdeeds; he remarked that "even for such a man we would have charity" if the offender atoned for his sins by the payment of a fine. And, unlike the routine practice of the pure-and-simple union, whose gaze was fixed unalterably on job security in the present for its members, the socialist trade union, according to DeLeon, looking rather to the ultimate job

security that would come on the heels of electoral triumph, subscribed in principle to the notion "that all the members of a trade be enlisted in the union—those at work, those temporarily displaced, and those that may be considered permanently displaced."<sup>37</sup>

As open as the rank and file end of the STLA cone was, its leadership end was closed. There was to be no hedging on the imperative that socialists hold sway over the organization. The Party "must," DeLeon warned, "either inspire the union with the broad, political purpose, and thus dominate it by warring on the labor fakir and on the old guild notions that hamstring the Labor Movement, or it is itself dragged down to the selfish trade interests of the economic movement, and finally drawn down into the latter's subservience to the capitalist interests that ever fasten themselves to the selfish trade interests on which the labor fakir, or labor lieutenant of the capitalist class, thrives." Accordingly, all union officers in the Alliance were formally barred by the STLA constitution from activity in any but the Socialist Labor Party. The stricture was expressly instituted to guarantee that Alliance affiliates would not fall victim to the "seal-catchers" of the class enemy and that correct, class-conscious politics would, without question, prevail. And to further insure that the Alliance would hew to the course set for it, provision was made for SLP sections to be represented directly in the STLA's central bodies on the same basis as affiliated unions, but without having to pay dues or take out charters. The Party was also given the right to send three delegates of its own to STLA conventions with full voting rights, permitting DeLeon himself to be in attendance to keep a watchful eye on deliberations.<sup>38</sup>

The contrasting admission and leadership policies implied that the real mission of the Alliance was to gain acceptance for socialist doctrine and then translate it into support for the political movement. The words of Party leaders, particularly those of DeLeon, confirmed it. Taking their cue from DeLeon's professions to the effect that more "could be done in one election . . . than in a hundred strikes," Party writers distinguished between Alliance and pure-and-simple strikes chiefly on the grounds that Alliance-led strikes provided organizing opportunities for the Party. When Party agitators appeared at the scene of strikes that were not being conducted under STLA auspices, they justified their presence there only in terms of the political possibilities such upheavals afforded. A case in point was DeLeon's visit to New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1898, where he delivered his famous

address *What Means This Strike?* to men who had struck the textile mills of the city. Since the strike was not being fought under the leadership of fakirs, DeLeon apparently judged the situation to be fluid and the men receptive to a well-argued political appeal. He made no effort to conceal his purposes, telling his audience: "I shall not consider my time well spent with you if I see no fruit of my labors; if I leave not behind me in New Bedford Local Alliances of your trades organized in the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. That will be my best contribution toward your strike, as they will serve as centers of enlightenment to strengthen you in your conflict, to the extent that it may now be possible." Lest there be any mistake as to what "enlightenment" these local alliances would offer and how the workers would be "strengthened" by them, DeLeon then advised the strikers to "organize a monster parade," at the head of which was to be carried a banner emblazoned with the legend: "We will fight you in this strike to the bitter end; your money bag may beat us now; but whether it does or not, that is not the end, it is only the beginning of the song; in November we will meet again at Philippi, and the strike shall not end until, with the falchion of the Socialist Labor Party ballot, we shall have laid you low for all time!"<sup>39</sup>

The Alliance's intended role as a passive medium of transition in which the primitive stirrings of class consciousness were to be converted into political action was also made explicit in DeLeon's discussion of the reasons behind the STLA's broad-gauged recruitment practices.<sup>40</sup> He maintained that whereas the union "only serves as a rear guard to a retreating army" insofar as wages were concerned, and since "the rear guard of a retreating army which can do nothing but retreat is a futile thing," it should dispense with thinking of itself as "a jobs-providing machine" and rise "to the elevation of its political mission" by "expand[ing] to gallon size" so as "to be able to contain the gallon measure of labor." While allowing that "this sounds like a chimerical idea under the general babe condition notions that exist," he argued that "such a union [would] fare [on the economic field] at least as well as it fares to-day," because "the best the union can do . . . to-day is to check the decline [in wages] and prevent it from going as fast as it otherwise would."<sup>41</sup> But resting on the votes of labor's "gallon measure," it was needless to say, the Socialist Labor Party would certainly fare better and would be in a position to do considerably more than brake labor's decline.

The mechanistic quality of this relationship DeLeon had adumbrated between the union and the party in his New Trade Unionism is suggested by his perception of what was most lamentable in the pure-and-simple, fakir-controlled unions, the thing that the Alliance was supposed to remedy. It was that the capitalist, "operating his labor lieutenants like lightning rods," could, in these unions, "r[u]n the revolutionary lightning" produced by the storm of class conflict "into the ground." The object of the STLA, then, one can infer, was to capture and channel into the political movement, through the cable of a socialist leadership, the explosive energy "the revolutionary lightning" represented. When confronted directly, DeLeon dispensed with the bunting of "something now" that he had draped around the STLA and quite candidly explained what the Alliance was about. To the question, "If even the pure-and-simplest of unions perform the only beneficial function that unionism can accomplish, why start the S.T. & L.A.? Why not all join the pure and simple union?," DeLeon replied:

For the same reason that the beneficent though negative provisions contained in a truce between two armies on a field of battle, would result disastrously to that one of the two that may be so ill informed as to construe the TRUCE for a TREATY, and deem victory won and the war ended—for that same reason do the compacts, periodically entered into by pure and simple unions with capitalists, and that have the beneficent effect of brakes on the decline of wages, exercise a steadily evil influence upon the working class. Pure and simple unionism condemns the Labor Movement to the status of a routed and retreating army, with unionism as the rear guard, uninformed and visionary enough to imagine its periodical and temporary stands against the advancing cavalry of capitalism to be victories that end the war. All the good that there may be in such stands and truces are thereby lost, they become a bane . . . the steadily evil influence exercised by pure and simple unionism [is] not a feature essential to unionism but only the result of an incident, to wit, its pure and simple character, which ignores the perpetual condition of war between Capital and Labor. This incident in unionism can and must be removed. Class-conscious unionism CAN profit by the truces that it concludes with Capitalism because it will not mistake them for treaties that end the war, consequently its retreats would never be retreats that inevitably are but the preliminaries for further and even worse retreats, its retreats would be the preliminaries for

final triumph. The S.T. & L.A. is there for the purpose of removing that incident that now blights unionism; that is the reason for its existence, and that is why, even though prices rise in tempo with the alleged rise in wages, and even though pure and simple unionism checks the decline in Labor's earnings, the S.T. & L.A. form of unionism is a necessity.

Unwilling to drop the guise completely, however, DeLeon was quick to deny that the STLA was, strictly speaking, a Party dependency or a stalking-horse for the SLP in the trade-union movement. He wrote: "In sociology as in biology formations shade into each other without destroying the typical feature of each. The Labor Movement or Socialism is political and economic. The S.L.P. represents the type of the political, the S.T. & L.A. of the economic arm of the Movement . . . while each trains and is bound to train recruits for the other, unfit is any remark that even remotely hints at either as a present or potential 'ward-heeling club' for the other."<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, the STLA *was* a "ward-heeling club" for the Party. And when DeLeon stated that the Alliance's inevitable "retreats" on the economic field would, unlike those of pure-and-simple unionism, "be the preliminaries for final triumph," he was as much as admitting that its "ward-heeling" efforts were being pursued in a manipulative fashion; that the Alliance was regarded as a sacrificial lamb whose "retreats" were to discredit by its own concrete example the economic mode of action per se and thereby render its ranks more susceptible to the political message of the SLP.

As clever and apt as the formula might have seemed in the mind of the theoretician, in practice the Alliance's mixture of conventional trade unionism and revolutionary politics proved a highly unstable compound that mercilessly exposed the gaping holes in the analysis that underlay it. The New Trade Unionism was unequal to the conundrum it addressed, and during the Alliance's nine years of existence the Party was unsuccessful in establishing a productive rapport with its offspring, in this sense repeating the experience of the politically inclined Knights of Labor leadership vis-a-vis that movement's trade unionists. A functional balance was never struck between the immediate economic and long-range political facets of the federation, and Party policy toward it was a self-defeating pendulum: first swinging far in the direction of allowing the Alliance to operate as a standard trade body, and then, the SLP top-echelon finding itself dissatisfied

with the results of its indulgence, overcorrecting in the opposite direction by drawing the political reins so tightly that the Alliance's economic work was stifled and any semblance of independence was eliminated. Thus, by the time the STLA's career had finally come to an end in 1905, the movement had been reduced, logically enough, to a veritable Party shadow, a paper organization consisting of little more than the SLP with its overalls on.

For its first two-and-a-half years of life, though, the Alliance did not behave as a creature of the SLP, and no doubt many in the organization sincerely believed it was exactly what DeLeon purported it to be—a self-governing union federation voluntarily committed to an equal partnership with the SLP. During this period, the STLA seemed to be doing well by normal trade-union standards, actively waging strikes and boycott campaigns and increasing its membership to some thirty thousand workers, organized in over two hundred chartered affiliates. To be sure, the political content and some of its attendant strife were ever-present, but they were more a subdued signpost of things to come than the pervading aura of the organization at this time.<sup>43</sup>

However, the picture changed dramatically at the Alliance's 1898 convention. Evidently, the Party's liberal stance toward its burgeoning creation had allowed a disturbing political laxity to creep into certain sectors of the Alliance, and DeLeon and his associates were determined to repair the damage and reaffirm the Party's dominance over union affairs before the situation got out of hand. To their shock and amazement, though, the assembled delegates demonstrated that, despite its youth, the STLA had developed a mind of its own on such matters, and the convention displayed an unexpected degree of what must have seemed to DeLeon filial ingratitude and disrespect toward the wishes of the Party. The delegates' intractability was revealed especially when the subject of the body's officers came up on the floor. DeLeon was displeased with the political deportment of Alliance General Secretary Ernst Bohm and Chicago organizer Thomas J. Morgan and proposed to the convention that they be stripped of their jobs, even though both had acquitted themselves satisfactorily in their duties as union officials.<sup>44</sup> The delegates turned him down, in effect putting him and the Party on notice that the Alliance would not be dictated to. A second issue was the election of general officers, and here the convention once again manifested its independence by selecting a general executive board that excluded DeLeon and otherwise

did not meet with the approval of the Party leadership. Aghast at this show of resistance to Party influence, DeLeon lost no time in having the convention's decisions reversed and the organization returned to safe hands. Using the Party disciplinary apparatus as a lever, he forced Bohm and the new executive board to resign, and a second convention more amenable to the will of the SLP met later in the year and elected a new, loyal board, with DeLeon among its members, and the reliable William Brower as general secretary. In the wake of the counterattack, a number of the largest locals in the STLA either withdrew in disgust or were formally cast out of the organization in an orgy of purgation of the sort that was increasingly becoming the SLP's trademark. It was as clear a signal as there could be that the Party was reclaiming its perquisites with a vengeance and that a stricter political regimen would henceforth prevail. The STLA brouhaha had its immediate repercussions within the Party too, where the dual unionist strategy was never universally popular, and recalcitrant sections sympathetic to the rebels were summarily excised, adding another potent issue to the festering dissension over the direction of the Party and fueling the bad feeling that a year later would well up in the major revolt that nearly destroyed it.<sup>45</sup>

After the STLA dissidents had been brought to heel, DeLeon reacted, as was his wont, by having draconian measures enacted to immunize the union-party relationship against a recurrence of the fibrillation with which it had obviously been afflicted. In 1899, locals belonging to trade alliances were for the first time required to join mixed districts in which Party branches held direct membership, and union offices were changed to correspond closely to those of the Party. In 1900, more stringent disciplinary procedures were introduced, and in 1902, the process of virtually incorporating the Alliance into the Party was completed by formally placing Alliance officials under Party jurisdiction, making SLP membership a prerequisite for membership on the general executive board, and proscribing the admission of any Party expellee into the Alliance.<sup>46</sup> The significance of these moves was that DeLeon and the SLP, shaken by the scare of 1898, were beating a retreat from the protocommunity strategy, as represented by the relatively unencumbered and free-wheeling STLA, to the narrower, but more comfortable and reassuring horizons of the Party community. The timid probe that had thrust just beyond the Party fortifications into the no-man's-land of trade unionism had en-

gendered difficulties that spread menacingly even to the Party itself, and the exposed member was hastily withdrawn. The year 1898 marked the beginning of an irreversible downturn for this first socialist answer to the pure-and-simple trade union.

The fact of the Alliance's absorption by the SLP registered clearly in DeLeon's post-1898 references to the Alliance. The sublime virtues of the union were now more than ever to him the identical ones of the unsullied, disciplined, and intrepid party of revolution. "As the sun will break through the darkest clouds," he grandly predicted in 1900, "so will the correct course, the integrity, the purity of the Alliance shine across all the clouds of calumny that are being hurled against it." As with the Party, size was, of necessity, treated as of much less importance than internal fortitude and ideological correctness. This DeLeon illustrated in 1904 in an acerbic fulmination at Max Hayes, an inveterate "borer from within" the AFL. After recounting that a socialist resolution Hayes had presented to a recent federation convention had been soundly defeated, DeLeon went on to say:

About a month later, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance held its annual convention. The S.T. and L.A. is a trades union built strictly upon the Socialist lines of the resolution which Max Hayes introduced . . . But the S.T. and L.A. is a very much smaller body. At its annual convention it numbered barely twenty delegates. Now, then, what do we find Mr. Max Hayes saying about the S.T. and L.A. convention? She ridiculed it on account of numbers! She, who had just been flattened out like a pancake by a huge Anti-Socialist convention, seemed proud of having been in a big crowd; and peeping from under the numerous heels that trampled upon her, she had jeers only for the smallness of the body that nevertheless upheld the principles which, in her hand, lay flattened out beside her, flattened out by a numerous body! Such are the fruits, the mental somersaults, of a chase after numbers.<sup>47</sup>

He responded to the skepticism of opponents who ridiculed the Alliance's aspirations "to smash the [established] Unions with a little bit of an Alliance," by retorting: "That is like what the heelers and politicians have told me: 'You want to smash the large Republican and Democratic parties with a little bit of a Socialist Labor Party.' " And the equation of socialist union and socialist party was brought full circle when DeLeon read the SLP's electoral achievements in his home



assembly district, as opposed to those of the "boring from within" Social Democrats, as "an endorsement, emphatic, too, of the S.T. and L.A. policy."<sup>48</sup>

But all the brave talk and the professions of faith did not alter the dire situation the Alliance and its political Siamese twin together faced in the first years after the turn of the century. Their fates firmly linked, the stock of both plummeted disastrously. The unhappy condition of the Party in these years has already been surveyed, and the STLA mirrored its enfeeblement, a desiccated husk that by 1905 could claim no more than fourteen hundred and fifty stalwart faithful on its rolls. In a model of understatement, DeLeon concluded in that year that the Alliance had had "a measure of success less than that confidently expected."<sup>49</sup> More accurate would have been the judgment that it had been a complete failure.

## 8 *Industrialism*

The desperate straits in which the Socialist Labor Party found itself after 1900 caused DeLeon to begin a reassessment of the American political environment and the role of the trade union. Two developments on the labor scene in the early years of the new century, one on the political side of the question, the other on the economic, shaped DeLeon's reappraisal. The political development was the rise of the Socialist Party, which immediately and convincingly outstripped the SLP at the polls. As has been noted, DeLeon attributed this turn of events to the sociological and economic immaturity of American capitalism in large areas of the country, and logically enough, he started to downplay the significance of the ballot. In 1901, speaking to the question of whether the recent McKinley assassination would deprive the SLP of votes that it might otherwise receive, DeLeon expressed a cool unconcern about the possibility that his party would suffer from a general antiradical reaction. He exclaimed: "What of it? What would be the meaning of the vote's going down? It would simply mean that the men who leave the Party at this election, voted for it at the last election when they were not fit for the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party . . . If the shot of Czolgosz takes votes from us, these votes never belonged to us." Continuing in this vein, he inserted a thinly-veiled reference to the SP: "If a freak political movement comes up, and if anybody thinks he can make a short cut towards Social Revolution, let him try it and find out. He will come back to us if he is worth having." About defectors of this stripe he indicated he would feel no special disappointment and would simply send them on their way with the words: " 'Wayward brothers, go in peace.' " And a year afterward, when denigrating the value of ballot reform proposals to the revolution, he declared: "It matters not how the voting is done; it

matters not whether we have the Australian ballot or the Maltese ballot; it matters not whether we have the secret ballot or the *viva voce* ballot—aye, if it comes to it, *it should not matter whether we have the ballot at all.*"<sup>1</sup> The theoretical upshot for the New Trade Union, whose main function was to garner votes for the genuinely class-conscious SLP, was that its assigned task lay in a milieu now defined as decidedly unfavorable, which dictated that its exertions would in all likelihood be fruitless and thus pointless.

DeLeon's sudden nonchalance toward the electoral process and his cavalier dismissal in 1904 of any serious thought about unity with the reform-minded Socialist Party both stemmed from the account he took of the second pregnant development of the period, the noticeably militant, class-conscious trend in Western labor, which fructified in the organization of the American Labor Union in 1902. The driving force behind the trend was the Western Federation of Miners, a tough, virile industrial union whose understanding of the rudiments of the class struggle grew directly out of the fierce labor-capital conflicts regularly convulsing the hard-rock mining camps of the West in the 1890s, where the use on both sides of six-guns, Winchesters, and dynamite often turned strikes into general conflagrations more akin to small civil wars. The WFM, which had been affiliated with the AFL, became disenchanted with the politically conservative, craft-oriented Gompers body and the lukewarm support it extended to the miners when they were locked in mortal combat with their employers. In 1897, the WFM pulled out of the federation, and the following year it set up a rival, the Western Labor Union, to organize all workers in the Western states. Four years later, the WLU was disbanded in favor of the American Labor Union, which, as its name implies, was a more ambitious venture intended to compete openly with the AFL throughout the nation, eliciting from Gompers the predictable howls of outrage. The radical Western workers, eschewing the pure-and-simple policy of "no politics in the union," tendered their political loyalty to the Socialist Party. Eugene Debs, the SP standard-bearer, was extremely sympathetic to the formation of the ALU and gave it his wholehearted endorsement, remembering well his own sobering tribulations during the Pullman strike with Gompers and the old-line railway brotherhoods, who kept their suspicious distance from his beleaguered American Railway Union in its hour of need. Debs's party as a whole, though, committed as it was to "boring from within" the

AFL and fearful of the ALU's strident revolutionary tone, frowned on its rambunctious dual unionism, and it was not long before a widening chasm opened between the union and the SP's moderate power structure.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of this new force in the labor movement, a sworn enemy of Gompers unionism that evoked the disapproval of the SP's leading lights, evidently intrigued DeLeon. Here was a union body, substantially more robust than the STLA,<sup>3</sup> that had evolved from the typical, primitive stage of instinctive self-defense to a point where it was on the threshold of a truly class-conscious political perspective, and it had made the journey without the benefit of the New Trade Unionism's program of artificial insemination and in a region where, according to DeLeon's frontier theory of skewed capitalist development, it would have been most unlikely to succeed. The phenomenon impelled DeLeon to a new respect for the independent potential of the trade union, and the opportunity it provided for a regrouping of the proletarian army on different, but still revolutionary, lines emboldened him to ignore the 1904 International Congress's plea for unity with the Socialist Party, which the SLP's severe weakness would have otherwise forced him to ponder seriously.<sup>4</sup> That DeLeon was closely following the affairs of the ALU and was impressed with what he saw is suggested by an observation he made in 1905 with respect to the union's appearance three years earlier. He recognized that:

This body was struggling to free itself from the trammels of 'pure and simple' superstition. Its constituent bodies had attested incipient clear-sightedness by tearing themselves loose from the American Federation of Labor. They had seen glimmerings of the truth that the Labor Movement is essentially a political Movement. They were shaking off the baneful superstition that fetters the workers to political scabbery as a 'glorious act of freedom.' In short, the American Labor Union was groping its way out of 'pure and simpledom.'<sup>5</sup>

When American Labor Union representatives met with like-minded unionists toward the end of 1904 and issued invitations for a conference to be held the following January, its stated goal being to set afoot a massive new industrial union on the left that would aspire to organize the entire proletariat on the principle of the class struggle, DeLeon's interest quickened. The SLP was represented at the conference, and it

endorsed the resultant manifesto calling for a convention that summer in Chicago. The idea captivated DeLeon, and in the months prior to the opening date of the convention he waxed enthusiastic over its prospects. Writing about the "Industrial Union Manifesto" in March, he announced: "The call summons the Working Class of America to a convention to place the Economic Movement of the land upon a plane that befits the country. The applause with which the call has been received justifies the expectation that a new, large and class-conscious Union will be born in June." And in an editorial appearing the day of the convention, DeLeon grandiloquently proclaimed:

Today, a great portion of the working class of this country is turning its gaze in the direction of Chicago. In the Great Lake city of the West there opens today a convention of workingmen, which, judging from the manifesto calling it, is destined to mark an important change in the history of labor in this country. This convention promises to launch an economic organization of the working class on the lines of the conflicting interests of capital and labor, in direct contradistinction to the prevailing organization, that is based on the principle of the mutual interests of capital and labor.<sup>6</sup>

The convention was everything DeLeon had hoped it would be. It gave birth to an uncompromisingly revolutionary superunion, the Industrial Workers of the World, that reflected the broad spectrum of discontent that had accumulated in reaction to pure-and-simple unionism. DeLeon could barely contain his joy over the accomplishment. In a letter to a Party comrade shortly after the convention had concluded, he effused: "I feel so happy and have so much, so very much to say that I simply could not begin to tell the story in writing."<sup>7</sup>

However, DeLeon's elation over the IWW and his tenure in the union would both prove short-lived. The IWW that later became a fixture in American folklore—the defiant and freewheeling band of men and women who fought for free speech on the streetcorners and in the jailhouses of San Diego and other towns, who flouted racial and ethnic prejudice, who pioneered in mass-industry organizing, who inspired the songs of Joe Hill and a novel by Jack London, and who suffered the tragic persecutions of the World War I era—this was not the IWW that DeLeon knew. He was active only in the organization's embryonic phase, as it struggled to define itself and stave off an early

demise. Between 1905 and 1908, the union's organizing efforts were meager and largely limited to the Western mining regions that had given the impetus for its creation. Even the IWW's most impressive success in this period, its organization of workers in the mining camp of Goldfield, Nevada, was merely a temporary affair. Rather, the energies of IWW activists were consumed in internal squabbling, as two major upheavals convulsed the union.

The first, occurring as a consequence of a bitter battle at the second convention in 1906, centered around Charles O. Sherman, the union president. Sherman, supported by an emerging conservative element in the Western Federation of Miners, a majority of the general executive board, and those delegates politically close to the Socialist Party, was bent upon driving those of more pronounced revolutionary beliefs, especially the DeLeonites, out of the IWW and putting the organization on a more conventional trade-union course. DeLeon, finding influential allies in executive board member William Trautmann and WFM leader Vincent St. John and resorting to shrewd parliamentary tactics, thwarted Sherman's plans, had him deposed as president, and forced him and his followers to withdraw instead.

DeLeon, as will be shown in more detail later, was himself the focus of the second imbroglio, which reached its climax at the 1908 convention. The dominant anarcho-syndicalist faction of the union, led by Trautmann, St. John, and union press editor Ben Williams, had grown tired of the interminable debate with the DeLeonites over what, if any, role the IWW should play in the political process, and faction members were impatient to proceed without further interference in building an organization that would only challenge capitalism frontally, at the point of production. The pressure for a final confrontation developed, too, in response to the changing composition of the union. Western migrant workers, who often did not remain in any locality long enough to establish residence and vote and who understandably discounted the efficacy of political methods, were becoming an increasingly vocal and significant segment of the rank and file, and they were anxious to dispense with the socialist hairsplitters from the East, whom they blamed for the IWW's faltering progress. Thus, when the delegates gathered at the IWW's fourth annual convention, the tide was very clearly running against DeLeon and his supporters, and well before the last gavel fell, both he and his position on political action had been eliminated from the movement.

Nevertheless, DeLeon might well have been pleased initially with his contribution to the proceedings of the founding convention; he was a pivotal member of the committee on constitution, which devised the IWW's charter of general principles, its "Preamble," and he was the preamble's most active and eloquent defender in floor debate. This labor, summoning forth all of DeLeon's skills as a theoretician, provided both the occasion and the incubative atmosphere for the new comprehensive theory of revolution that the convention's rigors drew from him. The IWW preamble, a testament to DeLeon's forte as a synthesizer of widely varying and often divergent ideas and concepts, became the infrastructure of his revised theory, which, in its essentials, he would expound for the remainder of his life.

The theory, a masterpiece of dialectical reasoning, modulated and integrated the effluent of dissonances emanating from the ideological heterogeneity of the IWW's first convention<sup>8</sup> and the incapacity of the New Trade Unionism to come to terms with the inclement realities of American labor's *élan vital*. While it revealed substantial readjustments and shifts of emphasis for DeLeon, it was not the dramatic crossing of a great divide that some have made of it.<sup>9</sup> Rather, there is in the theory a refinement of older concepts, an acceptance of new ones to attain objectives already pursued unsuccessfully via other avenues, and a bringing forward of elements previously latent. It was in many ways a compendium of DeLeon's nearly two decades of experience as an activist and theorist, the assimilative finale to his sinuous, Wandering Jew-like journey across the expanse of the "Social Question" in search of the corridor that would lead him to the redemptive future. Bridging past and future, reconciling party and trade union, balancing immediate demands and ultimate goals, and, as will be seen, blending peaceful political methods with the violent implications of the doctrine of class struggle, DeLeon's synthesis was a brilliantly executed display of the theoretician's art. In its structural precision and dynamism, in the symmetrical interrelation of its various parts, it was the very image of the age of industrial technology whose agonies had inspired it and which it now endeavored to conquer for industrialism's victims.

DeLeon's IWW-inspired theory, influenced as it was by the independent rise of class-conscious unionism and the ballot successes of the Socialist Party, sharply enhanced the prominence of the union in his revolutionary mural. The Industrial Union Manifesto, issued in

January 1905, called for "one great industrial union embracing all industries" as the basis for "working class unity." DeLeon read that document as clear evidence that "the Trades Union is today a child a-borning—not yet freed from the ligaments of capitalist society, yet pulsating forwards into the life of the Co-operative Commonwealth," and that the organization it projected would be "the culminating wave in a Movement, the first wave of which was the S.T. and L.A." By the time the Chicago conclave was ready to commence its deliberations, he expressed the view that "never before in the history of the American labor movement" were the prospects for class-conscious unionism as "favorable and worthy of support." And in the months between the manifesto and the convention, readers of his editorials could have noted that DeLeon began to scoff at the notion of the union as simply a "quarry for votes" for the political movement. Indeed, the political movement was now to be consigned to a "purely *destructive*" role; "the better, the constructive part of Socialist economics," he soon held, "translates itself into the industrial organization of the working class."<sup>10</sup> Hence, "the economic arm" rose in DeLeon's estimation to be "the more important," and to gainsay that truth henceforth rendered one liable to the charge of "pure and simple politicianism." Reversing his previous formulation of the party-union nexus, he maintained that "at the stage reached by the labor movement in America, the political unity of the working class can only be the reflex of economic unity" and consequently that "the political movement is absolutely the reflex of the economic organization."<sup>11</sup>

The economic organization, the source of proletarian unity, was to be structured exclusively on industrial lines, that is, the gathering of all workers in a given industry, regardless of skill, into one body, which in turn would be integrated into a union of industrial unions—the original conception of the IWW. So central to DeLeon was this feature of his doctrine that he called his new theory "Industrialism" or "Industrial Unionism." "Industrial Unionism," he explained, "is banked upon the principle that, for the same reason that loyalty is demanded of every individual member towards all others in any craft organization, loyalty is likewise demanded of every individual craft towards all others in the industrial world." "In the matter of Form or Structure," he stated, "Industrialism is a physical crystallization of the sociologic principle that the proletariat is ONE." The embodiment of class solidarity, "the integrally organized Industrial Union is the wea-



pon that Social Evolution places within the grasp of the proletariat as the means for their emancipation," in fact "the most potent weapon to clear the field of the capitalist despot."<sup>12</sup>

From 1905 on, craft unionism and pure-and-simple unionism became interchangeable terms in DeLeon's lexicon. He averred that the IWW "went further along the evolutionary line" than had the STLA, with its simple endorsement of the class-struggle principle, by rejecting the craft for the industrial form of organization. "Whatever the craft lines," he now argued, "the separate crafts are but fractions of the whole Proletariat. Consequently, however different the nature of the occupation, the work done, and the conditions of work, the useful labor of the land is ONE NATION, hence, must be organized as ONE UNION." This followed from the belief that "the organized useful occupations of the land . . . [are] something vastly greater than the mere sum of all the individual Crafts put together." The difference, he insisted, was one of "might" and "impotence," and he thus found particularly apt an illustration of the distinction offered by a delegate to the Chicago convention. Speaking shortly after the convention had ended, DeLeon related it to his audience:

Illustrating the point with the five fingers of his right hand far apart, he showed that to be the posture of the craft or autonomous unions—disconnected from one another for all practical work, and good only to act as a fan, a fan that had hitherto done nothing but scare the flies away from the face of the capitalist class; and, proceeding thereupon to illustrate the further point by drawing his five fingers tightly into a compact fist, he showed that to be the posture of Industrial Unionism—a battering ram, that would leave the face of the capitalist class looking materially different from the way it looked when it was merely fanned.<sup>13</sup>

The perceived superiority of the industrial structure flowed from the very nature of the socioeconomic system in which the labor movement was trying to operate. Huge, complex, concentrated industrial combines were the order of the day, their advancing technology increasingly wiping out skill differentials among workers. Individual unions built around discrete crafts were puny obstacles in the path of the corporate juggernaut and were manifestly unable to cope with the organizational problems posed by the masses of unskilled or variously skilled employees who might work for a given industrial concern. The

only logical course would be the creation of a countervailing proletarian organization as integral and encompassing as modern industry itself. Consequently, as the IWW's founding convention was about to open, DeLeon opined that the workers' growing awareness of "the organic changes in the system of capitalism . . . and the corresponding fallacy of the Gompers unionism" augured well for the Industrialist movement. And when the IWW adopted what DeLeon later expressly described as "that form of economic organization that capitalist development dictates," he seemed to savor the irony of the process in which, as he stated it, "capitalist development unintentionally and unwillingly forces the workingmen forward to reform their economic organizations upon a fit system, by itself marshaling the workers into the industrial batallions that ever more industrially organized capitalism itself furnishes the mold for."<sup>14</sup>

As a well-schooled Marxist, DeLeon had always been cognizant of the ineluctable trend toward concentration and integration in American industry and had recognized that that trend both offered the opportunity and justified the call for labor solidarity. Indeed, it was his appreciation of the strength of trustified capitalism that fueled his doubts about the continued utility of organized labor's standard economic weapons of strike and boycott and about the independent effectiveness of the trade unions wielding them. It had caused him to exhort socialist trade unionists to build mass, "gallon-size" unions and to seek to promote the requisite class consciousness by using the union as an academy for political indoctrination, the political party of socialism being regarded as the only possible source from which the universalism of labor solidarity could issue and the only means by which the power of capital could ultimately be broken.<sup>15</sup> But the failure of the New Trade Unionism, the rise of the ideologically flaccid Socialist Party, and the surprising, parallel upsurge of class-conscious unionism in the West compelled a reconsideration of how the gauntlet thrown down by advanced capitalism might best be picked up. Edified by the ALU and its industrially organized allies, DeLeon gradually discovered that the key to the problem was the industrial structure. Though he had instinctively gravitated toward Debs's industrial American Railway Union more than a decade earlier, he had never before attached any special importance to the way a union organized itself. Now, the industrial structure was treated as a basic ingredient in

his remedy for the debilitating disunity of labor on both the economic and the political fields.

With the workers in all industries grouped together in a single union, the curtain would descend on the degrading spectacle of "mutual scabbery" endemic to craft unionism, which DeLeon had so long decried and to which the antidote of political propaganda injected from without had proved unequal. In an address explaining the IWW preamble, DeLeon conjured up for his audience the cruel paradox of potential power and actual impotence that the curse of craft unionism, a curse presently to be lifted by Industrialism, had brought upon the working class:

All the plants of production, aye, even the vast wealth for consumption, is [*sic*] today in the keeping of the working class. It is workmen who are in charge of the factories, the railroads, the mines, in short all the land and machinery of production, and it is they also who sit as watchdogs before the pantries, the cellars and the safe-deposit vaults of the capitalist class; aye, it is they who carry the guns in the armies. But this place of vantage is of no avail to them under craft unionism. Under craft unionism, only one craft marches into the battlefield at a time. By their idly looking on, the other crafts scab it upon the combatant. What with that and the likewise idle onlooking of those divisions of the workers who man the commissary department, so to speak, of the capitalist class, the class struggle presents, under craft unionism, the aspect of petty riots at which the empty stomachs and empty hands of the working class are pitted against the full ones of the employing class.

Industrialism would also dispel the evil of proletarian political disunity that the ill-fated STLA had been constructed to combat. As he had known for some time, the sprawling divisions of the working class within both the economic and political realms were intimately associated phenomena, and as Industrialism would correct the economic ailment, so, too, he believed, would it check the political. From the class solidarity that animated Industrial Unionism, DeLeon asserted, "inevitably flowed a recognition of the necessity of a correct political posture for the very existence of the [Industrialist] organization." "It follows," he declared, "that perceiving the Working Class ruptured into craft bodies on the industrial and, consequently, ruptured into as

many political fractions on the political field, the I.W.W. was launched with a preamble in which the call rang clear and distinct to the Proletariat to 'come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field.' <sup>16</sup>

As central as the industrial union form was to DeLeon's theory, it must be stressed that at no point did he consider it to be of value when divorced from other aspects of the formulation, especially that formulation's basic political content. There has been some confusion on this score, some interpreters failing to distinguish the specific doctrine of "Industrial Unionism" from the generic term, "industrial unionism."<sup>17</sup> The theory's various features were not conceived of as separate, static properties, but as parts of a dynamic mix wherein each element qualified, and was qualified by, every other. Thus, when DeLeon penned the editorial he had published on the first day of the IWW's founding convention, he pointedly remarked that the convention's "mere declaration of Industrial Unionism will not suffice without the determination to make classconsciousness the essence of the new movement." He pointed out that the industrial structure was worthless without the political dimension, and he ridiculed socialists who concerned themselves only with the structure. And DeLeon continued to oppose "pure-and-simple" industrial unionism after the IWW had been launched. Industrialism, he iterated early in 1906, "does not consist of the clubbing together of a few closely kindred trades into one industry." "Industrialism" implied, rather, class struggle and complete labor solidarity and therefore did not encompass conservative bodies, like John Mitchell's United Mine Workers, which happened to possess the industrial form. DeLeon minced few words in illustrating the crucial difference: "A being in a bonnet is not therefore a woman, a being with a beard is not therefore a man, nor yet is a wolf in sheepskin a lamb. The Socialist Industrial Union respectfully declines kinship with . . . labor lieutenant Mitchell's concern."<sup>18</sup>

Although the industrial principle was a departure from DeLeon's previous concept of the union, his post-1905 view of what the union would and could do on a day-to-day basis was not. In the frame of the immediate present, he still saw the economic organization as a limited defensive weapon, and he at no time indicated that the "Industrial Union" would be any more successful in raising real wages than its craft counterpart. The main tool of the union remained, of course, the strike, and DeLeon remained skeptical of its merit. His acceptance of a

day-to-day function for the IWW was, inasmuch as his head was turned unswervingly to the future, a grudging accomodation to what he had for some time realized was inevitable—that workers wanted “something now” and would stubbornly undertake to get it regardless of what he or anyone else might say about the ultimate futility of the endeavor. Thus, as in his elaboration of the New Trade Unionism, he seemed uncomfortable dealing with the gritty business of labor’s struggle in the here-and-now, and his justificative and explanatory comments on it tended to brevity and vagueness. He allowed that “the economic movement may take a little at a time,” imagined it “attending intelligently to . . . immediate and economic needs,” and thought it “able to offer resistance to capitalist encroachments, and thereby . . . act as a breast-work for its members, while getting ready [for the revolution].” Such concessions to the immediate interests of the working class permitted him to announce in agitation speeches that “we are organizing . . . for the purpose of getting all we can now . . . and to wreck the pirate craft of capitalism.” But the technique for “getting all we can now,” the strike, remained strictly “a move of defense,” “a weapon that excludes the very thought of aggression, let alone of revolutionary onslaught.”

The strike against an employer . . . is not a method of revolution; it is a method of warfare within existing conditions. It is a tacit recognition of an existing social order. It is more, it is in the nature of a declaration of loyalty to the system in force. The workman who goes out on strike does first of all leave in the hands of the capitalist the plant of production. By that mere fact he admits that the employer is the rightful owner, at least as much is implied. The revolutionary act of the working class . . . will not be a strike.

DeLeon evidently found no reason, however, to change the policy of toleration toward strikes, which he had followed in the Alliance. Strikes were held not to be harmful as long as the workers who engaged in them understood their severe limitations and placed these minor skirmishes in the class war in the proper political perspective. If workers, therefore, could not be dissuaded from expending their energies in strikes, DeLeon accepting as unavoidable the fact “that thought lingers behind newly formed and forming material bases,” at least they could enter the fray adequately equipped with a knowledge of the

general class struggle of which shop-floor confrontations were symptomatic incidents. He argued in familiar terms that:

A Union whose conception of society is capitalistic will find its economic aspirations dominated accordingly. Ignorant of the wage slave nature of its membership, it will seek to deal with the employers as peers . . . Indisputable is the fact that most of the economic efforts on the part of workingmen today,—despite their material conditions, which no longer furnish a basis for ‘conservatism’—are conservative. The circumstance is only additional argument why such efforts are fatedly ineffective. On the other hand, a Union whose conception of society enlightens it on the wage slave status of its membership, together with the rest that thereby hangs, such a union will not circumscribe itself to conservative aspirations.<sup>19</sup>

If DeLeon's treatment of the union's purely defensive present role was elliptical and hasty, it owed to his eagerness to progress beyond the obligatory deference to “something now” in his discourses and address what he now considered the economic organization's crucial function in the revolutionary metastasis: its performance of the “consummating act of labor's emancipation.” DeLeon developed this enhanced role for the union more than a year prior to the first IWW convention, when his disgust at the electoral achievements of ersatz socialism, his corresponding doubts about the sufficiency of the ballot process, and his growing admiration for the militancy of the ALU were prompting him to modify his ideas. To a lecture audience in April 1904, he recalled the 1896 presidential election campaign, when big business was frightened by the possible victory of the supposedly radical William Jennings Bryan and threats were made to shut down businesses if he were elected. From this DeLeon deduced that “the ruling capitalists have it in their power to create a panic any time the government slips from their hands.” What gave them that power was pure-and-simple trade unionism, whose craven docility insured that capital's writ would be law in the nation's shops and factories in a moment of crisis. Hence, even if the workers, the majority of voters, “were to sweep the political field on a class-conscious, that is, a bona-fide labor or Socialist ticket, they would find the capitalist able to throw the country into the chaos of a panic and to famine unless they, THE WORKINGMEN, WERE SO WELL ORGANIZED IN THE SHOPS THAT THEY COULD LAUGH AT ALL SHUT-DOWN OR-

DERS, AND CARRY ON PRODUCTION." The integrally organized, class-conscious economic organization, then, was "essential in order to save the eventual and possible victory from bankruptcy, by enabling the working class to assume and conduct production the moment the guns of the public powers fall into its hands." DeLeon's previous, implicit assumption that capitalists would voluntarily acquiesce in their own dispossession by the electorate was, with the adoption of this new provision for the forcible seizure of industry, cast aside. Of those who persisted in holding that assumption, he said: "They are the real utopians of today who imagine the Socialist Commonwealth can be established like spring establishes itself through its balmy atmosphere, and without effort melts away the winter snows."<sup>20</sup>

After the union's role as the muscle behind the socialist ballot was incorporated into the preamble of the IWW, DeLeon, in his most extended elucidation of the preamble, elaborated further upon the concept. Stating his case even more strongly, converting the possibility of an extrapolitical capitalist revolt against the electoral triumph of socialism into a virtual certainty, he declared: "It would be the signal for a social catastrophe if the political triumph did not find the working class of the land industrially organized, that is in full possession of the plants of production and distribution, capable, accordingly, to assume the integral conduct of the productive powers of the land. The catastrophe would be instantaneous. The plants of production and distribution having remained in capitalist hands, production would be instantly blocked." For,

the Socialist ballot is

weaker than a woman's tears,  
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,  
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,  
And skillless as unpracticed infancy,

Unless it is backed by the *might* to enforce it.

And "might" could only be furnished by "the organization of the several industries themselves," the omnibus industrial union, whose structure alone "is fit for the task, to 'take and hold' the industrial administration of the country's productive activity." But armed with that power, a capitalist "strike" of the kind contemplated in 1896 to frustrate the electorally expressed will of the working class would be

abortive: "Let the capitalist attempt, under the pressure of the political temperature raised by the ballot of labor—let him attempt to strike. In possession of the might conferred and implied by the industrial organization of their class, the working class would forthwith *lock out the capitalist class*." Thus did DeLeon henceforth hold that "without the integrally organized Union of the Working Class, the revolutionary act is impossible" and that "without economic organization, the day of its [the proletariat's] political triumph would be the day of its defeat."<sup>21</sup>

Aware that his "lock-out" doctrine bore some resemblance to the centerpiece of the syndicalist credo, the concept of the general strike, DeLeon took pains to demonstrate that the two were qualitatively different. In fact, he asserted that, to avoid confusion, the term "general strike" should not be used at all with reference to the mission of the IWW, and that instead "general strike" should "be substituted by the more appropriate term of *the general lock-out of the capitalist class*." The reason why he did not want the general strike confused with the general lock-out was that the former was, when it came right down to it, merely a strike, however extensive its effect might be, and thus laden with the shortcomings endemic to the genus as a whole:

The 'general strike' starts from the premises that the machinery of production, together with all the rest of the wealth of the land, the stored foodstuffs included, is the rightful property of the present possessors; the 'general strike' cannot, accordingly, nor does it aim at aught but better conditions. Proceeding from such false premises, the 'general strike' ever gives the lie to the revolutionary aspirations that underlie it. It can only aim at a composition, at a compromise. As a weapon of the Social Revolution the 'general strike' is, accordingly, a clumsy weapon. The weapon of the Social Revolution is not the 'general strike,' but the 'general lock-out' of the capitalist or usurping class. The weapon of the 'general lock-out' proceeds from the correct premises that the land and the fulness thereof are labor's, and, so proceeding, it starts with possession. It thus safeguards the revolution against being starved out.<sup>22</sup>

The notion underlying the "lock-out" doctrine, that a physical-force capability was a basic requirement for a revolutionary movement, was not really new to DeLeon's thought. While, curiously, he had not before 1904 articulated it theoretically, he did contend once at the out-



set of his career that labor's need for physical strength could not be overlooked. Addressing a rally in November, 1890, he observed that:

As Lassalle had said a generation ago, Socialism entered the field equipped with all the science of its time; hence Socialists knew that force, at its time and place, was an essential hand-maid to justice. Bluntschli, one of the most distinguished jurists of the day, whose expressions are well-nigh axiomatic, put it that Force, through its exercise of Might, aided the advent of Right . . . The history of the country itself showed its recognition of the principle and its esteem for the men who led . . . [during] crises. Washington, Andrew Jackson, Zacharia [sic] Taylor, U.S. Grant were each in turn raised to the highest office in the gift of the people. While rejecting the use of force out of season, Socialists therefore recognized its necessity in season.

After lying dormant for nearly a decade and a half, the "Might" behind the "Right" was retrieved when the events of the early 1900s seemed to call for it. In 1904, DeLeon wrote that "at whatever period of social development great revolutions are considered, physical force has remained, down to the latest instance of recorded history, the final court where final judgment was finally pronounced," and he proceeded to illustrate the point by reviewing how this court of last resort operated in the uprising against Charles I in England, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American Civil War, concluding that the economic organization of the proletariat, "ten to one, as taught us by modern history, will have to march upon the field of last resort, summoned thither by the usurper." Thereafter, the "Might"- "Right" formula became a frequent refrain in DeLeon's discussion of the union's revolutionary mission.<sup>23</sup>

His revitalized interest in the question of force betrayed an increasing pessimism about the lengths capitalists would go to preserve the present social order. He gradually adopted the view that there were no limits to the violence they would unleash, no depths of foul behavior to which they would not descend, if they felt genuinely threatened. Accordingly, the workers had to be prepared for the worst, indeed, had to expect it. DeLeon's writings were now liberally sprinkled with references to "capitalist brutality" and "the brute measures of the barbarian" and grave warnings that there was a great likelihood of workers eventually having to use force. That the revolution needed the backing of effective physical force became even more imperative to

DeLeon when, during the winter of 1906-1907, he began to believe that the cauldron of class struggle in America would probably boil over into a physical encounter before the watershed of a socialist victory at the ballot box was even reached.<sup>24</sup> "Some capitalist outrage on the economic field," he predicted ominously, "will precipitate war."

A strike will break out; capitalist brutality will cause the strike to spread; physical, besides moral support, will pour in from other and not immediately concerned branches of the Working Class. A condition of things—economic, political, social-atmospheric—will set in, akin to the condition of things in 1902, at the time of the great coal miners' strike, or in 1894, at the time of the Pullman-A.R.U. strike. What then? The issue will then depend wholly upon the degree, in point of quality and in point of quantity, that the organization of the I.W.W. will have reached. If it has reached the requisite minimum, then, that class-instinct of the proletariat that Marx teaches the Socialist to rely upon, and the chord of which the Capitalist Class instinctively seeks, through its labor fakers, to keep the Socialist from touching, will readily crystallize around that requisite I.W.W. minimum of organization. The Working Class would then be organically consolidated . . . Capitalism would be swept aside forthwith.

Or, as he more colorfully put it, "the Might of the proletariat will then be there, free to resort to the last resort, and physically mop the earth with the barbarian Capitalist Class." But, he admonished, if the workers "should find themselves in so weak a degree of integrally industrial organization as they now are in, or in a stronger one, yet not possessed of the minimum of strength needed for resistance, cohesion and attraction, then the armed force of the capitalist class will mop the earth with them."<sup>25</sup>

Even though DeLeon knew, as the class struggle grew more intense, that he could not ignore the explosive quality of class relations and that the proletariat had to be prepared for the contingency of a violent reaction from the capitalist class, he personally dreaded violence. Despite his often belligerent rhetorical flourishes, his fondness for martial metaphor, and his aggressive, declamatory rodomontade, the idea of real bloodshed was quite alien to him. An intellectual who thrived on verbal sparring, a man who was in his element on the speaker's rostrum and in the debate forum, DeLeon was in truth temperamentally habituated to the normal, largely pacific realm of American electoral

politics. Speaking early in his career, he uttered sentiments on violent tactics that remained a keynote in his subsequent thought. Regarding the socialist tradition with which he identified, he declared: "With men who talk dynamite, bombs[,] blood and thunder, Socialists had no sympathy. No good man would dwell with calmness upon bloodshed, and many of those who did so, when the occasion came, would surely be the first to show a clean pair of heels." The concept of the general lock-out bespoke his desire to minimize the mayhem that would ordinarily accompany a revolutionary upheaval, and, if possible, to prevent its occurrence entirely. The beauty of the strategy was that it placed in the hands of the proletariat a flexible weapon that could be deployed decisively along the full spectrum of possible force-violence situations. For example, before DeLeon began to have deep forebodings about the sinister methods capitalists would use to entrench their hold on power, he indicated that the very existence of a workers' organization poised to seize industry might actually deter all counterrevolutionary resistance and preclude the need for any application of force. He stated in 1905: "Before the strong, the bully crawls. Let the political temperature rise to the point of danger, . . . [and] your capitalist will quake in his stolen boots; he will not dare to fight; he will flee. At least I, for one, expect to see him flee . . . The complete industrial organization of the working class will then have insured the peaceful issue of the struggle." And the presence of the industrial organization, as it would discourage reactionary violence, or, if need be, repress it, simultaneously offered a disciplinary mechanism to contain and harness to a productive purpose the vengeful fury of the oppressed. DeLeon fully appreciated the perils posed by calculated capitalist provocation, which could goad the workers to premature action in a retaliatory, counterproductive frenzy of destructive excess. In 1912, he remarked that: "The means in contemplation by REACTION is the bayonet. To this end REACTION is seeking, by means of the police spy and other agencies, to lash the proletariat into acts of violence that may give a color to the resort to the bayonet. By its manoeuvres, it is egging the Working Class on to deeds of fury." The industrial union organization would, however, keep the workers from taking the bait and furnishing the master class with the pretext for even greater outrages, for, as DeLeon had earlier commented, though the physical-force factor in revolution was duly recognized by the Industrialist movement, the latter would "not allow itself to be heated

into the blind passion of pushing [it] out of the proper perspective."<sup>26</sup>

The industrial body and the advanced capitalist milieu that sired it, DeLeon also argued, made all talk of preparations for more formally organized violence—such as the creation of an actual military formation—irrelevant. The raising of sufficient armed force was, in his view, the height of impracticality. There was no way the proletariat could acquire the necessary equipment and the requisite training in its use. If the workers did manage to mount an army, it would, as a result, be no match for the professional, well-armed force at the disposal of the capitalist. But DeLeon hypothesized:

Suppose, finally, that the problem of the billions [for armaments] were solved, and the still more insuperable problem of exercise and drill be overcome. *Suppose* the military organization of the proletariat took the field and triumphed. And then—it would immediately have to dissolve. Not only will it not have been able to afford the incidental protection that the revolutionary Union could afford to the proletariat while getting ready, but all its implements, all the money that it did cost, all the tricks it will have learned, and the time consumed in learning them, will be absolutely lost. Its swords will have to be turned into pruning hooks, its guns into ploughshares; its knowledge to be unlearned.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from being impractical and projecting a profligate squandering of resources, a military organization was not needed, for: "Social Evolution has wrought [for the proletariat] as it has wrought for none other. It has builded the smithy of capitalist industrial concentration; and, in keeping with the lofty mission of the Working Class to abolish class rule on earth, Social Evolution has gathered ready for the fashioning, not the implements of destruction, but the implements of future peace, . . . the *industrially ranked* toilers." Hence, DeLeon asserted: "The element of 'Force' consists, not in military or other organization implying violence, but in the STRUCTURE of the economic organization, a structure of such nature that it parries violence against itself, shatters it, and thereby renders the exercise of violence in return unnecessary, at least secondary, or only incidental."<sup>28</sup>

Whether the industrial union organization took control of the nation's economy to implement or enforce a socialist victory at the polls or whether it did so prior to that time in self-defense against capitalist outrage on the economic field, the outcome in DeLeon's Industrialist

scheme would be the same, marking the completion of the union's sublime mission. Once holding the reins of industry, the economic body would not relinquish them; it would instead immediately assume its crowning role as the permanent administrative infrastructure of the socialist republic, in theory neatly solving the community-protocommunity puzzle, the conflict between the present and the future requirements of the revolutionary movement. As DeLeon succinctly phrased it: "Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation. Accordingly, the Industrial Union is at once the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of Capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself." The idea of Industrial Union government DeLeon had already sketched in rough in the spring of 1904. He then stated that "the industrial organization forecasts the future constituencies of the parliaments of the Socialist Republic."

Civilized society will know no such ridiculous thing as geographic constituencies. It will only know industrial constituencies. The parliament of civilization in America will consist, not of Congressmen from geographic districts, but of representatives of trades throughout the land, and their legislative work will not be the complicated one which a society of conflicting interests, such as capitalism, requires but the easy one which can be summed up in the statistics of the wealth needed, the wealth producible, and the work required—and that any average set of workingmen's representatives are fully able to ascertain, infinitely better than our modern rhetoricians in Congress.

After the Industrialist state concept was included in the IWW preamble, DeLeon amplified on it. First, it gave him, incidentally, a convincing justification for the avoidance of violence in the commission of the revolutionary act. Elucidating the preamble to a Minneapolis audience in the summer of 1905, he declared that: "The shops, the yards, the mills, in short, the mechanical establishments of production, now in the hands of the capitalist class—they are all to be 'taken,' not for the purpose of being destroyed, but for the purpose of improving and enlarging all the good that is latent in them, and that capitalism dwarfs; in short, they are to be 'taken and held' in order to save them for civilization." Looking ahead to that moment, DeLeon grandly depicted what would occur:

The central administrative organ of the Socialist Republic—exactly the opposite of the central power of capitalism, not being the organized power of a ruling class for oppression, in short, not being political, but exclusively administrative of the producing forces of the land—*its* constituent bodies must be exclusively industrial . . . As the slough shed by the serpent that immediately reappears in its new skin, the Political State will have been shed, and society will simultaneously appear in its new administrative garb. The mining, the railroad, the textile, the building industries, down or up the line, each of these, regardless of former political boundaries, will be the constituencies of that new central authority the rough scaffolding of which was raised last week in Chicago [at the IWW's founding convention]. Where the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World will sit there will be the nation's capital. Like the flimsy cardhouses that children raise, the present political governments of counties, of states, aye, of the city on the Potomac herself, will tumble down, their places taken by the central and the subordinate administrative organs of the nation's industrial forces.

DeLeon firmly believed that such a governmental system immunized Industrial Unionism against "both . . . the Anarch self-deceit of the 'No Government!' slogan, together with all the mischief that flows therefrom, and . . . the politician's 'parliamentary idiocy' of looking to legislation for the overthrow of Class Rule." And he maintained that, following the plan he outlined, "the Industrial Union aims at a democratically centralized Government, accompanied by the democratically requisite 'local self-rule.'"<sup>29</sup>

As indicated above, DeLeon equated the political state, the geographically constructed polity, with class rule, and in doing so, paid his respects to the Marxist precept on the nature of the state. He granted that the political state "was the unavoidable consequence of the rupture of society into classes," a historically necessary development that had arisen in response to the laws of social evolution; but he also recognized that these same laws now dictated its demise:

The political State was no scheme of fiends, bent upon plaguing humanity. The political State was the step that ethnic-sociologic law compelled society to take. It was within the shell of the political State that the tool, or machinery, of production was to be perfected; production itself organized; co-operative labor brought about; and, thanks to the abundance thus rendered potential, lift

from the shoulders of man the primal curse of the brute's arduous toil for bare physical existence. This to accomplish being the ethnic-sociologic mission of the political State, the arrival of the human race at that stage—the stage that our generation has reached—when abundance for all is possible without arduous physical toil for any, is the trumpet-blast announcement that the shell of the political State is no longer needed, and should be broken through and cast off.

The retention of the political state apparatus beyond the exhaustion of its historic utility, DeLeon argued, had only served "the purpose of concealing the fact that, not territories, but industries are represented in capitalist parliaments." For the capitalists, "it would not do to change the system of representation along with the developed system of the thing represented." From their point of view, he continued, "the fact of the change had to be kept secret; the secret was necessary in order to preserve the false local prides of the empty-headed; and also to pull the wool over the eyes of the workers who are to be blinded to the fact that what is really represented is not the people, but the special interests of the 'representatives.' " Seizing specifically on congressional districts as an example, DeLeon stressed that:

The thought of production is absent, wholly so from the congressional demarcations. It cannot be otherwise. Congress—not being a central administration of the productive forces of the land, but the organized power of the capitalist class for oppression—*its* constituent bodies can have no trace of a purpose to administer production. Shoemakers, bricklayers, miners, railroadmen, together with the workers in all manner of other fractions of industries, are, accordingly, jumbled together in each separate congressional district.

For these reasons, the political state had to be dismantled; to do otherwise was to be guilty of "parliamentary idiocy." "Socialist society," in DeLeon's words, "knows nothing of the Political State: in Socialist society the Political State is a thing of the past, either withered out of existence by disuse or amputated—according as circumstances may dictate." "We shall either have Socialism—and that means that the State shall have vanished," he said, "or we shall preserve the State, and then we shall have no Socialism."<sup>30</sup>

As abolishing the state precluded the possibility of "parliamentary

idiocy," the erection of a new form of government to replace it preserved Industrial Unionists from the opposite pole of error, "Anarch self-deceit." Contrary to anarchism, which also opposed the political state, "The Industrial Union," DeLeon affirmed, "grasps the principle: 'No Government, no organization; no organization, no co-operative labor; no co-operative labor, no abundance for all without arduous toil, hence, no Freedom.'" <sup>31</sup> The model for Industrial government was the earliest of social forms—the primitive "democracy of Communism, a social system, or call it Government, whose main, if not sole function, was the direction of production,—the only legitimate, because the only necessary, *object* of social organization; the only legitimate because the only necessary function of a central directing authority." "The Social Revolution," he explained, "carries in its folds a social system, which, arriving at the democratic equality of the Communism of old, plants itself upon the elevation of ripened experience" and upon "the altered, improved and perfected, in short revolutionized economic possibilities" of modern technology. To be sure, it would be a government, but one that demolished the centuries-old barrier between politics and society, between governance and production. It would resurrect the best attributes of the "original system, under which 'government' rested upon the *people*, not upon *territory*" and would be "part and parcel of the productive energies of the people."<sup>32</sup>

The idea that the socialist republic would be administered by a government based on economic syndicates had been, despite the contrary assertions of some scholars,<sup>33</sup> a factor in DeLeon's political thought since the late 1880s, although prior to 1904 it had only been implied or expressed in passing. In point of fact, DeLeon's original study of socialist literature had probably won him to the concept, for several of the main influences on his intellectual development as a socialist defined the governing structure of the society of the future in just such terms. The utopia of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, for example, which DeLeon and his fellow Nationalists had striven to actualize, was governed by the upper ranks of an "Industrial Army" composed of constituencies that were derived directly from the nation's industrial structure, the older territorial patterns having been swept away along with the other features of the corrupt competitive society that the cooperative commonwealth had supplanted.<sup>34</sup> Laurence Gronlund's *The Cooperative Commonwealth* (1884), a widely read tract



that anticipated Bellamy's novel in many particulars and with which DeLeon was also familiar, projected a similar system of governance.<sup>35</sup> And Ferdinand Lassalle, an important writer whom DeLeon no doubt encountered during his initial education in socialism and for whom he continued to have high regard, proposed a comparable societal model founded on worker-run cooperatives.<sup>36</sup> Even more significant in directing DeLeon's thinking was Lewis Henry Morgan, a pioneering American anthropologist whose sophisticated materialist analysis of Amerindian communities, *Ancient Society* (1877), provided DeLeon with his understanding of the evolutionary process by which society had lost but would regain in the future the virtues of primitive communism.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it is noteworthy that in Eugène Sue's *Le juif errant* the workers whom Ahasuerus aided were led by their employer, a sympathetic character called Monsieur Hardy, who had established a living and working communal regime very similar in concept to the Fourieristic *phalange*.<sup>38</sup>

Having thus been tutored to apprehend socialist government as industrial in character, it is not surprising that from the outset of his radical career, DeLeon would voice assent to the principle. In 1889, while making a speech for Nationalism, he called expressly for a government composed of representatives of trade unions, and in the spring of the following year he was heartened by the belief that "the wage-class has possessed itself of the true science of industrial government" and was, under its guidance, "surely marching to a new social order." In 1890, attempting to extricate himself from the embarrassment of having backed Henry George in 1886, DeLeon claimed to have been fooled by *Progress and Poverty's* introductory pages, where "Lassalle's name [was] quoted approvingly and the realization of that great man's golden dreams declared to be its [the book's] aim." "Throughout its text," DeLeon rationalized, "I came across explicit statements as to the need of government being the administrative organ of the cooperative industries of the people," only to find later "that Mr. George was utterly unacquainted with that for which Lassalle stood," and "had [not] the slightest inkling of the import of the economic term 'Cooperation'; that, in a word, he had used phrases, not scientific definitions."<sup>39</sup>

Thereafter, until he delivered *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism* in 1904, it is true that DeLeon made few allusions to the governance features of the socialist republic and that in his major

speeches he devoted his attention less to its specifics than to the means by which it could best be reared. Yet, the construction of several of his remarks concerning the Socialist Labor Party's accession to power suggests that the process of bringing forth a socialist society was understood to involve something materially different from simple SLP control of the political state apparatus and the enactment of the Party's programmatic desiderata. Addressing workers in 1901, for instance, he stated:

The mere change, or the mere abolition of the governmental pimple can, obviously, bring no improvement, whatever else it may do . . . Purity, no more than freedom, can come to a people from the outside. As those who would be free must themselves strike the blow, so must that social lever named 'government,' to be used to establish freedom and purity, evolve from within . . . the Socialist Labor Party . . . says to the workingman: True enough, you must seek to capture the government, true enough you must aim at the overthrow of the present government, but not as either a finality or a starter. The overthrow of the government you must aim at must be to the end of using the governmental power to perfect the revolution that must have preceded your conquest of the public powers . . . You must have raised yourselves to appreciate your high mission in the evolution of society, in that only the economic program of your class is able to abolish the slavery of the race. You must, in consequence, have first learned what use to make of the government, when gotten, to wit, to use it as a social lever with which to establish the Socialist Republic and install the government that our needs require and that civilization needs.<sup>40</sup>

And there were even stronger indications that industrially based government remained very much in DeLeon's plans for the administration of postrevolutionary society. In an 1896 speech, after synopsisizing Morgan's scheme of the evolution of the state, he averred, anticipating clearly his explication of Industrial Union government, that:

What Socialism says is: 'Away with the economic system that alters the beneficent functions of the Central Directing Authority from an aid to production into a means of oppression.' And it proceeds to show that, when the instruments of production shall be owned, no longer by the minority, but shall be restored to the Commonwealth; that when, as a result of this, no longer the minority or any portion of the people shall be in poverty, and classes, class distinctions and class rule shall, as they necessarily

must, have vanished, that then the Central Directing Authority will lose all its repressive functions, and is bound to reassume the functions it had in the old communities of our ancestors, become a necessary aid, and assist in production.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, in 1902, when being interviewed by *New York World* journalist James Creelman, DeLeon replied unequivocally to the question "What is your plan for electing the officers of the Government?" asserting: "The Government would be chosen and the laws made by delegates elected by the various trades." "A government of walking delegates?" Creelman asked. "Yes," responded DeLeon, "if you choose to put it in that jesting phrase."<sup>42</sup>

In this period, DeLeon did not expound such views with the frequency and in the detail that he did after the founding of the IWW, because he probably considered extensive treatment of the subject premature. Only after the IWW made its appearance did discussion of the specifics of postrevolutionary society seem in order, the near-ecstatic tones with which he greeted the new organization revealing his high hopes that the revolution would now soon be at hand. As he put it, the IWW was "the first practical preparation in America for the Revolution that will lead society out of the economic storm of Capitalism into the haven of the Co-operative Commonwealth." His attitude before 1905 toward repeatedly detailing the postrevolutionary system of government is probably captured in a later comment, made in a debate in which his antisocialist opponent was trying to undermine him by pressing for information on the minutiae of postrevolutionary administration. DeLeon answered:

We are asked for a complete list of items of the Socialist Republic. The same demand has been made before upon great men upon great occasions—and with as little sense . . . take Washington. When he was fighting the battles of independence, there were Tory pamphleteers who pestered him and the other Revolutionary Fathers with questions upon the kind of government they contemplated . . . Washington's answer was: 'First, lick the British.' . . . like Washington we say: First, lick the British of today.<sup>43</sup>

Evidently, prior to the hoisting of the IWW standard, DeLeon fixed his attention on the problem of "licking the British" and left to a more appropriate season the extended examination of what would follow.

However early DeLeon may have envisioned a socialist order constructed around economic syndicates, that notion and the idea of eco-

nomic units themselves effectuating the revolution now focalized theoretically the misgivings about the ballot that he had begun to express after the turn of the century. As a result, there followed a considerable and explicit downgrading of the significance of electoral work. For one thing, to DeLeon's increasingly jaundiced eye the very honesty of the conduct of the suffrage was open to serious question, casting doubt on the worth of the exercise itself. Hence, DeLeon considered it likely that even if the political party of labor were to actually collect the winning margin of votes in an election, it would suffer surreptitiously contrived "defeat by the election inspectors" if not an overt nullification of the result in the manner of "the Southern slaveholders . . . at the election of Lincoln." The unreliability of the electoral process was yet another reason why the economic might of the industrial union had to be available to the revolution; it offered the only effective means to counter "capitalist political chicanery polluting] the ballot box."<sup>44</sup>

Although he granted that the political process, and by extension the socialist political movement, were thenceforth to be of secondary concern, DeLeon did not pursue this line of thought to its extremity and rule out political action altogether. He had expended too much of himself in the political wars of the preceding two decades and the political had in that time penetrated far too deeply into his consciousness for him to discard it completely. Thus, although he turned away from political action in his writings and speeches after 1900, DeLeon ironically emerged as the most outspoken and consistent defender of an IWW presence in the political arena during his three years in the organization. Indeed, two days before the union's first convention even began its formal business, he requested and got a meeting with William Trautmann and Thomas Hagerty, two key figures in the nascent movement, and told them that a clause recognizing the need for working class political unity would have to be placed in the preamble before the STLA delegation he headed could support it, and though they were somewhat dubious, he succeeded in gaining their assent. Prior to the 1906 convention, he attended another meeting, this time with Eugene Debs and IWW president Charles Sherman, and the three reportedly agreed to join forces against any antipolitical moves that might surface at the upcoming conclave.<sup>45</sup> And thereafter, up until the day that he was denied a seat at the 1908 convention by the dominant antipolitical elements gathered there, and though he found himself

ever more alone and embattled in upholding his position, DeLeon persisted in his advocacy of an IWW political expression.

Caught in the crosscurrents of his skepticism toward the method of politics and his lingering predilection for it, he readily conceded that "no doubt there are many thorns to the rose of the political movement" but maintained that "no rose is without them." The crucial question to DeLeon—"Is . . . [the political] stalk all thorns and no rose?"—could only be answered in the negative, for to hold otherwise left "unexplained the phenomenon of the unquestionable hatred that the capitalist press manifests for the S.L.P." That a political movement could so threaten the class enemy as to evoke hatred indicated that there was a "rose" amidst the bramble. Carrying the floral metaphor further and then transferring the burden of his thought to medical and nautical images, DeLeon affirmed his conviction that politics, irrespective of its serious flaws, was a necessary activity:

All talk concerning the thorns that beset the political stalk are beside the question. Such talk . . . should [be] reserve[d] for the pure and simple political Socialist party men. Addressed to the S.L.P. men, such talk is superfluous and inconsequential—as inconsequential as would be extensive dissertations on the stench that periodically is felt in dissecting rooms, and of the diseases such stench occasionally breed: THE DISSECTING ROOM IS NECESSARY;—as inconsequential as would be extensive dissertations on the accidents and discomforts that result from ocean travel: OCEAN TRAVEL IS REQUISITE. The pure and simple political Socialist man is on the political question what a man would be who favors the dissecting room for the sake of its stench, or the man who favors ocean travel for the sake of its perils and discomforts. That . . . is not the S.L.P. position . . . The S.L.P. man clings to political action because it is an absolute necessity.<sup>46</sup>

By treating the political phase of the struggle as a regrettable necessity, DeLeon sought to assuage the tension between his own contradictory impulses on the question and to salvage a role for politics in a movement that was from its inception straining in the direction of syndicalism.

The opposing tendencies regarding politics, within DeLeon and the IWW generally, were articulated clearly in the wording of the "political clause" of the preamble. On the one hand the preamble called for

the workers to "come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field," but on the other, they were to do this "without affiliation with any political party." Resourceful in resolving seeming paradoxes, DeLeon had no special problems with this one: the IWW, committed to unity on the political field but proscribed from affiliating with a political party, would simply have to mount its own political body. In the sense that such an inference looked to an integral linkage between union and party, it raised aloft an ideal not terribly different from the one DeLeon had striven to have the incestuous SLP-STLA relationship approximate. But in accordance with the changed ratio of importance between the two elements, the party would be the shadow of the union rather than the reverse.<sup>47</sup> And so completely did he accept the concept that the economic unit reflected the political that he invested it with a deterministic quality, arguing that labor parties per se, whether "true" or "bogus," were but the appurtenances of the economic organizations to which they related:

A political party of Labor can not ignore the trunk from which it is a shoot. 'Neutrality' by the shoot towards its trunk is inconceivable.—Incidentally there follow from this, as reverses of the thought, first, that a true political party of Labor is bound to carry into the political arena the sound principles of the revolutionary economic organization which it reflects, and feel bold to proclaim the fact; secondly, that a bogus party of Labor is likewise driven to carry into the political arena the false principles of the bogus economic organization, and be prompted by the cowardly feeling of striving to deny its parentage.<sup>48</sup>

The party that the revolutionary economic organization was to father would, not surprisingly, have exactly the same attributes as the Socialist Labor Party. As DeLeon put it:

What the name of that political party will be it is now too early to know. What the leading characteristics of that Party will be—*that* is knowable today. That political Party must demand the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class; that Party must be aware of the fact, and its every act must be in accord thereto, that the necessary evolution, which has to precede the evolutionary crisis known as 'revolution,' has already taken place in the womb of society in the shape of development and concentration of the means of production; consequently, that all talk about 'evolution' as an excuse for bourgeois improvements, or 'one

thing at a time,' is born either of hopeless stupidity, or of designing corruption, or of a constitutional poltroonery, from any one of which the Revolution can only expect betrayal at the critical moment; that Party must be *one* thing only to all men, *one* thing in all latitudes and longitudes [*sic*] of the land—no perfidy to principle under the guise of 'autonomy . . .'<sup>49</sup>

Members of the party who won election to public office would be enjoined by its unswerving commitment to overthrow the hegemony of the capitalist class and would thus refrain from the parliamentary practice of "log-rolling," which could take place only "between opponents who have a common ground to stand on."

Another sort of parliamentary activity is that observed between opponents who have no common ground to stand on. Such parliamentary activity is the only one permissible to the representatives of a party of Socialism . . . Such parliamentary activity, wherever obtainable, is, to a great extent, the continuation, upon the much more widely heard forum of parliament, of the agitation and education conducted by such a party on the forum of the stump during the campaign. Such parliamentary activity preaches and demands the revolution—the surrender of the capitalist class. Anything short of such activity by the elected candidates of a party of Socialism is 'log-rolling'; 'log-rolling' implies a common ground between the 'log-rollers'; consequently the 'log-rolling' Socialist must have shifted his ground to that of his capitalist opponent. Such a Socialist betrays the Working Class.

And the rule applied to Socialist parliamentarians would bear with equal force on those acquiring offices of an executive nature.<sup>50</sup>

But the purity of the political movement was not expected to be self-generating. The union, besides having become the determining variable in the Industrialist formulation, was also seen to be the repository of virtue, the party being merely the light the union cast into the political realm. Turning the central assumption of the New Trade Unionism upside down, the union would have to provide the compass that would hold the political body on course; it would have to be the disciplinary backbone of the party, for only through its vigilance could there be any assurance that the political movement would remain true to its purpose.

DeLeon doubted that the party could independently stem corrup-

tion within its own ambit: his own SLP had nearly devoured itself in the struggle to maintain a forthright revolutionary posture, only to witness the burgeoning of a more numerous and electorally successful impostor. Chastened by the experience, he became a supreme pessimist about the outcome of a politics ungirded by the taut fiber of a revolutionary economic organization.<sup>1</sup> Hence, when addressing the delegates of the IWW's first convention, he sourly observed:

If anything is clear in the American situation it is this: That if any individual is elected to office upon a revolutionary ballot, that individual is a suspicious character. Whoever is returned elected to office on a program of labor emancipation; whoever is allowed to be filtered through by the political election inspectors of the capitalist class;—that man is a carefully selected tool, a traitor of the working people, selected by the capitalist class . . . I know not a single exception of any party candidate, ever elected upon a political platform of the emancipation of the working class, who did not sell them out as fast as elected.<sup>51</sup>

The belief that only the union could provide the antidote for such waywardness began to emerge in DeLeon's writings in the months before the IWW's genesis, the phenomenon of radical Western unionism undoubtedly being the stimulus. After the IWW preamble was adopted, which DeLeon construed as implicitly assigning such a watchdog function to the union, he drew together the threads of his earlier observations in light of the principles enshrined in the union charter: "That [industrial] *might* the labor movement needs, as much, I would almost say, against the political movements which its own breath heats into being as against the capitalist tyrant himself . . . it . . . needs that might to prevent the evil consequences to which, in this corrupt atmosphere of bourgeois society, the political movement is inevitably exposed." "Against this danger," he contended, "there is but one protection—the Industrial, that is, the classconscious economic organization to keep th[e] ballot straight."

Nothing short of such an economic organization can keep sharp the edge of the special sword wielded by the political movement of labor . . . Without the *might* of the classconscious economic movement back of the political, the political movements that the labor movement inevitably promotes in America will not only be divided but, as a further result, will promote that confusion of thought that runs into corruption and that, reacting back upon



the economic movement itself, helps to scuttle its efficiency . . . Skillless as unpracticed infancy, a danger to labor itself, is the sword of labor's ballot without the might of the classconscious economic organization to whet its edge, to keep it sharp, and to insist upon its being plied over the skull of the foe, to insist upon that at the peril of the muddleheads, of the weakling, of the traitor.<sup>52</sup>

The economic movement had to see to it that its political reflex did "not even remotely partake even of the appearance of compromise," since in the final analysis the political body "exemplifie[d] the revolutionary aim of the labor movement." It embodied labor's claim on the future and kept it homed on ultimate redemption.<sup>53</sup> Certainly, "The very nature of the [economic] organization preserves it from the danger of 'resting satisfied,' of accepting 'improvement' for 'goal,' " inasmuch as it "is forced by economic laws to realize it can preserve no 'improvement' unless it marches onward to emancipation."<sup>54</sup> Yet, without the pristine beacon of a socialist politics insulated against opportunism, the economic organization would be devoid of adequate means for expressing its aspirations for a different social order and devoid of a satisfactory method for securing it. The political organization, however, whose only purpose in the present was to prepare for that which lay ahead, consequently lacked an innate quality that could sustain its morale, and it was "prone to 'rest satisfied' with incidentals and 'improvements.' " <sup>55</sup> By conjoining the endemic spirit of class consciousness present in the economic organization to the function the political movement could alone perform, it was hoped that the shortcomings of each of labor's two phases would cancel each other out.

Specifically, the job of the political reflex was that of "a path-clearer for the economic organization"; its "goal" was "*the razing to the ground of the robber burg of capitalist tyranny.*" Political power would thus solely "be taken for the purpose of *abolishing it.*" This function determined the structure of the party; the structure of the economic organization was unsuited to this particular task. DeLeon explained:

Socialism is the outgrowth of the higher development from capitalism. As such, the methods of the Socialist movement on its march toward Socialist society are perforce primarily dictated by the capitalist shell from which Socialism is hatching. Seeing that

capitalist economics translate themselves into politics, Socialist economics cannot wholly escape the process . . . [They] inevitably . . . [take] the form that matches capitalist methods. Upon that plane the Socialist movement crosses swords with the modern ruling class—these to uphold, it to dislodge them from and dismantle their robber burg.

"It follows," he reasoned, "that the structure of a [socialist] political party must be determined by the capitalist governmental system of territorial demarcations." But the function and the resultant structure of the party also defined it as a purely transitory element, for: "It does not lie in a political organization, that is, a party, to 'take and hold' the machinery of production. Both the 'reason' for a political party and its 'structure' unfit it for such work." DeLeon underscored the point by posing a hypothetical situation:

Suppose that, at some election, the classconscious political arm of labor were to sweep the field; suppose the sweeping were done in such a landslide fashion that the capitalist election officials are themselves so completely swept off their base that they wouldn't, if they could, and that they couldn't, if they would, count us out; suppose that, from President down to Congress and the rest of the political redoubts of the capitalist political robber burg, our candidates were installed;—suppose that, what would there be for them to do? Simply to *adjourn themselves, on the spot, sine die*. Their work would be done by disbanding. The political movement of labor, that, in the event of triumph, would prolong its existence a second after triumph, would be a usurpation[.] . . . would be to attempt to usurp the powers which its very triumph announces have devolved upon the central administration of the industrial organization . . . What the political movement 'moves into' is not the shops, but the robber burg of capitalism—for the purpose of dismantling it . . . The artillery may support the cavalry; the cavalry may support the infantry of an army in the act of final triumph; in the act, however, of 'taking and holding' the nation's plants of production, the political organization of the working class can give no help. Its mission will have come to an end just before the consummation of that consummating act of labor's emancipation. The form of central authority, to which the political organization had to adapt itself and consequently looked, will have ceased to be.

This was the meaning behind DeLeon's subsequent assertions that "the Socialist Republic . . . can not be the result of legislative enactment"; that "no bunch of office holders will emancipate the proletariat"; and that that emancipation "can only be the mass-action of the proletariat itself, 'moving in,' taking possession of the productive powers of the land."<sup>56</sup>

However, in speaking for the establishment of a political wing, circumscribed and temporary though it might be, DeLeon was at pains to justify his advocacy. He had, after all, claimed that the socialist ballot was and would continue to be counted out and stated that the intensity of class conflict would likely preclude the "Social Question" 's ever coming to a vote. To this problem, he responded:

While the Socialist ballot was, is and may continue to be counted out, the political movement accomplishes that which all the counting out will not be able to counteract. A man may monkey with the thermometer, yet he is utterly unable to monkey with the temperature . . . So with the election returns. They are the political thermometer. The political pickets of the capitalist class may monkey therewith to their heart's content—they will be unable to alter by the fraction of a degree the political temperature that prevails all around. Now, then, that political temperature . . . *is pre-eminently the product of the political movement of labor.*

This thereafter became the keynote of his defense of the political reflex. Increasingly, DeLeon stressed that politics involved more than the ballot and that its primary value was as a medium of agitation for the economic organization. He scolded antipolitical opponents for "confus[ing] *political agitation* with the *ballot*." "The two," he insisted, "are distinct." "The value of the 'ballot' as a constructive force is zero; the value of 'political agitation' is immeasurable."<sup>57</sup> "Of course," he granted, "'political agitation' implies the setting up of a political ticket, and that, in turn, implies the 'ballot.' Indeed, the 'ballot' may be lost; let it; the fruits, however, of the 'political agitation' are imperishable."<sup>58</sup> "Political action," DeLeon contended, was in fact a "generic" term "embrac[ing] a number of things," including "primaries; conventions, or any other established method for the nomination of candidates for office . . . ; campaigning, that is, agitation in favor of

the principles and, of course candidates, of the party; voting . . . ; finally, as a consequence, 'parliamentary activity.' " The merit in these various activities was the opportunity they offered to broadcast the propaganda of the movement. "The nomination of tickets, together with all the routine that thereby hangs, is but an incidental—like the making of a motion to which to speak, and without which motion being before the house, speaking degenerates into disorder."<sup>59</sup>

Driven to the last ditch of agitation by antipolitical pressure within the IWW and by his own admission that victory at the ballot box was probably an unrealizable ideal, DeLeon sensed that his strong suit lay in the area of practicality rather than that of philosophical disputation, and he pressed to the fore the argument that recruitment for the economic organization depended on political action. He claimed that the industrial unions charged with carrying out the revolutionary act could not be raised to sufficient size "without the aid of the agitation and education which the political movement places in the hands of the revolution." "The long and short of it all," he declared, was that bereft of a political reflex, "the revolution could not gather the necessary recruits," and with good effect he repeatedly demanded of critics that they answer the question: "How is the I.W.W. to recruit and organize its forces if it starts with the absolute rejection of the political ballot?"<sup>60</sup> And to those who dwelt on the fact that many proletarians—children, women, blacks, aliens, and itinerants—did not enjoy the franchise and that therefore the exercise for them was useless, DeLeon, transferring the base of the discussion from voting to agitation, replied:

Fully sixty per cent of them, that is, all, except the infants and the sick, can be made the carriers of the agitational and educational propaganda of the revolution . . . Though they be not entitled to cast a single vote, they can distribute literature, and those who have the gift—though foreign, female, Negro or otherwise disfranchised—can by speech promote the revolution by teaching it on the political platform.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, DeLeon consistently held, "In a country like ours, where, in keeping with full-fledged capitalism, the suffrage is [otherwise] universal, the inevitable political character of the labor movement is rendered all the more marked."

The institution [of universal manhood suffrage] is so bred in the bones of the people that, notwithstanding it has become a gravel

in the shoe of the capitalist, he, powerful though he is, dare not abolish it outright. Among such people, chimerical is the idea of expecting to conduct a great movement, whose palpable aim is a Socialist Revolution, to the slogan of 'Abstinence from the ballot-box!' The proposition cannot choose but brand its supporters as freaks.

In addition to a relatively free suffrage, the American Constitution, particularly Article V, its amendment clause, exposed the antipolitical posture as frivolous and unwarranted. DeLeon had been and continued to be impressed by the fact that:

The Constitution that the Revolutionary Fathers set up is the first in recorded history to legalize revolution—a marked innovation in the spirit and traditions of the political State—an innovation that meant nothing less than the contemplation, and rendering at least theoretically possible, of institutional change without the hitherto inevitable accompaniment of violence and stoppage of industry. The Constitution accomplished the feat of legalizing revolution by means of its amendment clause, thereby providing for the overthrow of the institution which [it] itself had reared, and thereby also providing for the method, political action.

Paraphrasing Washington, he pointed out that "our people hold the government in the hollow of their hand."<sup>62</sup>

It was the existence of formal democracy in the United States, according to DeLeon, which made the political movement an indispensable agency for the task of recruitment. In a democratic polity, the political party "affords the labor movement the opportunity to ventilate its purposes, its aspirations and its methods, free, over and above board, in the noonday light of the sun," "thereby enabl[ing] the revolution to be brought before the million-masses" upon whom the execution of the revolutionary act would finally depend. "It raises the labor movement above the category of a 'conspiracy'; it places the movement in line with the spirit of the age, which, on the one hand, denies the power of 'conspiracy' in matters that not only affect the masses, but in which the masses must themselves be intelligent actors, and, on the other hand, demands the freest of utterance." "Otherwise," DeLeon warned, labor's "agitation would be consigned to the circumscribed sphere of the rat-hole." Conspiracy, the only possible outcome of agitation in "rat-holes," was, he elucidated, ruled out by the spirit of the age "for reasons parallel to those that decree the day of

small fry competition gone by." Hence, "while The Trust-holding Plutocracy may successfully put through a conspiracy of physical force[, ] The smallness of its numbers mak[ing] a successful conspiracy possible on its part[, ] The hugeness of the numbers requisite for a revolution against the Trust-holding Plutocracy excludes Conspiracy from the arsenal of the Revolution."<sup>63</sup>

Quite apart from the needless restraints that the out-of-hand rejection of political action placed on the work of organizing, it also pointlessly exposed the movement to grave dangers. The inevitably conspiratorial manner in which labor would thus be forced to operate entailed secrecy, which DeLeon called "the bane of the union generally" and a practice that "would be the destruction of the revolutionary union" if adopted. He wrote:

The widest publicity is essential to safety. Secrecy leaves the majorities in the Unions in ignorance of what happens at Union meetings; secrecy promotes the trade of the police spy, the 'agents provocateurs,' those raw-boned 'anti-political revolutionists,' like McParland, in the pay of the capitalist politicians. Left in ignorance of what happens in the Union, the majority of the membership is ever dependent upon private information; the informant may be honorable, he may also be dishonorable; the revolution must not be exposed to trip upon misinformation. On the other hand, the 'agent provocateur' will find his occupation gone if publicity is enforced; the blood and thunder ranter, knowing *his* words would be published as coming from *him* will love his neck too well to indulge in crime-promoting declamation. Secrecy is *death*; publicity, *life*.<sup>64</sup>

For a revolutionary movement to spurn politics in a democratic political order, DeLeon further contended, was tantamount to avowing adherence to illegal tactics and gave the capitalists the ideal pretext for crushing it without a second thought. As he stated the matter:

The rejection of political action would throw the I.W.W. back upon the methods of barbarism—physical force exclusively. Where, as in Russia, no other method exists, none other can be taken up. Where, however, as in the rest of Western Civilization, especially in America, the civilized method exists of public agitation, and of peaceful submission to the counting of ballots that express the contending views;—where such methods exist, the man or organization that rejects them does so at his or its peril.

This is especially the case in the capitalist America of today. The capitalist class, however powerful, is not omnipotent. It feels constrained to render at least external homage to the Genius of the Age. The Genius of the Age demands free speech and a free vote. So soon, however, as a Labor Organization were to reject the peaceful trial of strength, the capitalist class would be but too delighted to apply the system of Russian Terrorism.

"Then," his dark portent held, "there will be born an 'Underground America,' as there has long been an 'Underground Russia,' " and that, as he once put it, would mean "good-by to the I.W.W." "The handful of revolutionists . . . [would] be forced into surreptitious propaganda, and the Revolution . . . [would] have to raise itself above ground by its own boot-straps." If such came to pass, DeLeon imagined,

The movement of the American working class would . . . see their actions reflected in the actions of the Russian revolutionists: compelled to move about in disguise, creeping stealthily at night to place bombs in the chimneys of the residences of the American Wittes, the heroines among their women sacrificing their chastity upon the altars of Freedom as the only means to gain access to the soldiery of the Despot class in order to stir them to mutiny, as was done by several heroic Russian revolutionary women in the fortress of Kronstadt.

The upshot was that, if for no other reason, the political reflex was required to provide a legal umbrella under which the movement could organize, one protecting it against arbitrary action by the capitalist-controlled agencies of government. Citing Marx, DeLeon stated that the mission generally of a political party of labor was to " 'raise a bulwark against the power of Capital,' " and specifically with regard to the IWW, to be a "shield which will protect it, in front, against the pure and simple politician; in the rear, against the 'agent provocateur.' " <sup>65</sup>

Clearly expecting his Socialist Labor Party to form the nucleus of this "shield" when finally raised, DeLeon channeled all of his and his party's efforts to that end. The SLP enthusiastically promoted the union, and DeLeon was himself generally conciliatory and self-effacing in the organization, belying the reputation unfairly given him by his detractors for vituperative excess and a schismatic, "rule-or-ruin" mentality.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the gulf separating DeLeon and his antagonists on the political-action question was too wide to be bridged by

mere amiability and displays of good faith on his part. When he would not relent in his defense of the preamble's political clause, the opposition gradually determined that the IWW must rid itself of him and his followers. In March 1908, it declared open war on the DeLeonites, as General Executive Board Chairman Ben Williams delivered a bristling speech against the SLP, asserting that the Party couldn't serve in any way as the union's political reflex and effectively reading it out of the movement, this touching off a three-month series of angry exchanges between the organs of the IWW and SLP. In May, an *Industrial Union Bulletin* editorial spotlighted the drift of the anti-political faction's thinking when it declaimed:

Tragic, indeed, would it be if the workers had to look for some 'intellectual giant' to map out for them the road which they must take on their onward march towards industrial freedom. By plagiarizing [*sic*] the expressions first moulded by members of the working class a few may try to befuddle the minds of thousands with their doctrinaire vaporings, implications and interpretations; and in disgust thousands of others are turning away, as they will not allow their throat to be used to 'force down the wisdom,' or the misinterpretations and misconstructions put of the original manifesto.

Fred Heslewood, writing a few weeks later in the *Bulletin*, was yet more blunt, excoriating "these political fanatics" who caused the union press to waste valuable space on what he considered sterile philosophical debate and demanding an end to the argumentation. If the "fanatics" didn't like such a change, said Heslewood, they could "go to hell, or some other place." As the 1908 convention drew closer, it was apparent to both sides that the fat was very definitely in the fire. J. H. Walsh, leader of the "Overalls Brigade" of Western hoboes who would be instrumental in ejecting the DeLeonites from the convention, was, by late August, already stating openly that his people were intent on keeping "all Democrats, Republicans, Socialist and Socialist Labor Party men" out of the convention. To this, DeLeon sarcastically responded that "if the gentleman correctly represents the views of the organization, then only Prohibitionists and Independence Party men, besides *dynamiters*, who also claim for their special activity a political character, will be left. An interesting aggregation."<sup>67</sup>

Despite the fact that the outcome was probably a foregone conclu-



sion well before the convention opened, and although feeling was running against DeLeon to the point that his personal safety was in some jeopardy, he courageously showed up to have his say, telling the hostile assembly: "I, fired by the need of this hour, considered it my supreme and commanding duty to be at this convention to save the ship from suffering shipwreck on the rocks[;] this command for service in the cause of the international proletariat brought me here, under dare, to direct the ship into safe waters."<sup>68</sup> However, his defense of himself and his concept of the political reflex was fruitless, the "ship's crew" seemingly preferring to go down without him to staying afloat with him, and his credentials were rejected, abruptly terminating his association with the organization he had helped to found and for which he had had such great expectations.<sup>69</sup> As DeLeon had so many times driven people out of the SLP and the STLA on grounds of principle, he now tasted the lash himself, a victim of doctrinal intolerance. As had also been the case in the SLP, he had sought to immerse himself,<sup>70</sup> but instead emerged to personify what he advocated, and once again found himself isolated.

The union he had hailed as "a turning point in the history of the land" and as "the matured means for the attainment of matured purposes" had now been, as far as he was concerned, "ground to dust." Of this, he perhaps had had some vague presentiment when the IWW was first being launched. He wrote then of Engels' mention of the philosophy of Heraclitus, "who said, 'Everything is and yet is not, for everything flows, is in constant motion, is in constant process of formation and dissolution.' " "In other words," DeLeon pointed out, "life is not a fixed but an ever changing and growing phenomenon." "In no phase of life," he advised, "is this philosophy so applicable in its general features as in the economic and social spheres of man. There integration and disintegration are constant and incessant." Applying this philosophy to the convention about to meet, DeLeon warned that should the new union fail to answer "labor's prayer for relief, . . . retrogression will be its lot, while integration and disintegration will continue in the world of labor as of yore." But it was cold comfort to him that his premonition was belatedly confirmed by the actions of the 1908 convention. The "disintegration" that occurred there permanently severed DeLeon's theory of Industrialism, the climactic final product of many years of practical experience and theoretical inquiry, from the organization that alone gave promise of being able to imple-

ment it. He had expressed the opinion, when debating his antipolitical antagonists, that "preaching alone is worthless: 'aims' without 'organization' to carry them out are . . . just so much hot air."<sup>71</sup> Yet the calamitous turn of events at the 1908 convention placed DeLeon in that very, tragically absurd position. For him, the dictum of Heraclitus notwithstanding, there would be no phase of "integration" to succeed the "disintegration." The IWW was his last significant forum in the labor movement. His Industrialist precepts would never again animate a union body of any consequence.

## 9 *The Life and Legacy of DeLeon*

The period between DeLeon's forced departure from the IWW in 1908 and his death in 1914 was one of frustration and impotence for him. Unable to attach himself to either of the main movements on the left, the IWW or the Socialist Party, his influence receded to the residual minimum of his SLP base, the Party's narrowed compass now including only a relatively few diehards with an increasingly sectarian outlook. In their ambience of failure, these years of denouement revealed DeLeon's life sadly coming full circle: after having denuded himself of his Jewish identity to escape the loneliness of what seemed to him an isolated minority reposing outside the flow of history, and after having then submerged himself in the vast, anonymous proletarian sea into which that flow appeared destined to empty, he found himself, in the twilight of his life, again part of an eremitical sliver of humanity, the wraithlike SLP. And connoisseurs of irony could easily liken his conception of the Party to the Jewish people he had in 1879 described as "that heroic handful of the world's civilizers" sojourning amidst "brutalized masses." The isolation and the coming full circle after 1908 were also reflected in the public debates in which DeLeon participated; formerly having locked horns with other prominent labor figures on the vital economic and political issues before the movement, presently he was confined largely to tilting with establishment spokesmen in lyceum or academic settings for the edification of comfortable audiences similar to those he had addressed so frequently as a polite reformer.<sup>1</sup>

His exile from the heart of the labor movement could be read, too, in his post-1908 theoretical writings. DeLeon's theory had always been

formulated in reaction to the practical problems he had confronted as an activist, and it had thus been a faithful index of his posture with regard to the movement at any given time. And now, as he suffered almost total exclusion from the meaningful work of wrestling with the pregnant realities of the labor situation, which had been the impetus and the lifeblood of his creativity as a theoretician, the pattern of correspondence held true, for, divorced from the tonic effects of direct involvement, his thought stagnated, fed upon itself, and hardened into dogma. Bereft of sustentative roots in an ongoing movement, Industrialism became an abstraction, DeLeon continually and pathetically indulging in the Barmecidal repast of restating its tenets as if a viable organization existed that could act upon them. And the further the remove from actualization, the more involute and baroque the doctrine grew in DeLeon's hands.<sup>2</sup>

A rump IWW adhering to the original preamble was, it is true, put together in Detroit by zealous DeLeonites shortly after the SLP men were obliged to withdraw from the Chicago convention, but it was done over DeLeon's protests, and his lack of enthusiasm for the "Detroit" IWW was thereafter conspicuous. He realized it was a dubious venture, a mere resuscitation of the discredited STLA satellite, and he completely ignored it when enunciating Party policy in the wake of the IWW debacle. Hence, in a speech in 1909, a few scant months after the Detroit IWW had been organized, DeLeon could announce that:

Under existing conditions, that organization of Socialism which is bound to appear first is the political. The very nature of its mission, essentially propagandist, determines its priority. The political organization of Socialism must be the disseminator of that knowledge and information which will take organic shape in the class-conscious, industrial organization of the working class—the foundation and structure of the Socialist Republic. Thus, although the political is the transitory, and the economic organization the permanent formation of future society, the political organization, like the scaffolding of a building, must precede the permanent structure.<sup>3</sup>

A measure of his disinterest was the attitude he exhibited toward the Detroit IWW's only real hour in the limelight, its leadership of a major strike of silk workers in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1912. While the *Daily People* gave sympathetic coverage and editorial support to the

strikers, DeLeon, in his conversations with the leader of the revolt, Rudolph Katz, was not encouraging about the outcome. Nor did he take any part in the agitation and the organizational work of the union, for which the strike provided the perfect opportunity—a most uncharacteristic stance for a DeLeon who had willingly entered the vortex of the storm before to win supporters for the STLA and the IWW. Though the Detroit IWW and the SLP flooded Paterson with some fifty spellbinders to aid in the campaign, the Party's premier orator remained aloof a short distance away in New York and only appeared, with Party National Secretary Paul Augustine, to pay a ceremonial visit to Katz after the latter had been arrested for his role in the work stoppage.<sup>4</sup>

Looking back over DeLeon's life from the vantage of his melancholic final years, there was an unmistakably Sisyphean agony in it: the initial movement in a given direction; the anxious anticipations of progress, further stirred, perhaps, by its first glimmerings; and then defeat and disillusionment, only to stimulate movement in a new direction with the very same results looming in the next cycle. Even more, the life evokes the restless journey of the Wandering Jew, not the hopeful rendering of the St. John variant that touched DeLeon through the work of Eugène Sue, but that of the darker Malchus motif stressing despair and excruciation. DeLeon unwittingly captured the tragic essence of his story when he offered to the 1905 IWW convention the comment that: "I can imagine nothing more weak, more pitiable from a man's standpoint than to aspire at an ideal that is unrealizable, and I have overhauled my position again and again answering this question: 'Is this problem that you have undertaken as one of so many—is it a problem that is solvable?' And I have concluded that IT IS."<sup>5</sup> But for Daniel DeLeon, at least, the problem was not solvable. He had indeed overhauled his position again and again in quest of what proved an unrealizable ideal, impelled onward by the erroneous belief that it could be attained, stayed only by the finitude of his own mortality. If not weakness, there is certainly pathos in that.

After a lengthy illness DeLeon died in New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital, a Jewish institution,<sup>6</sup> symbolizing another dimension to his tragedy: the paradox that the character of his flight from Judaism seemed to bear, in many particulars, the imprint of the Jewish experience itself, bespeaking an underlying psychological bond to his origins that, in spite of himself, he could not sever. His apocalyptic Marxism, for instance, approximated in form the Jewish eschatology he had im-

bibed during his upbringing, possibly predisposing him unconsciously toward the secular doctrine. By explaining the asperities of the present world as necessary, and by strengthening one against their demoralizing arduousness through the promise of certain future salvation, Marxism substituted for a creed seemingly drained of relevance by the industrial age. Providing, too, for a chosen people, albeit one defined more in consonance with the mass quality of the machine epoch, the Marxian system similarly prophesied the destruction of its tormentors. DeLeon's addition of the Catholic Church to the scheme—as the embodiment of the throwback to Dark Ages repression, to which capitalism would repair as its last barrier against the revolutionary tide—was likewise an apparent reflection of his original identification with the Jewish people. While Sue's handling of the Jesuits in *Le juif errant* triggered its unfettered expression, DeLeon's resentment against the Church was probably engendered by his exposure during his formative years to the vivid collective memory of the Inquisition lingering in the Iberian Sephardic enclave of his birth.

That Judaism itself shaped DeLeon's efforts to divest himself of his Jewishness emerges, moreover, in his sketches of L. H. Morgan's materialist theory of societal development: the benign, but impoverished, innocence of human society in its primal stage of communism; its supplantation by a society of classes and private property as humanity struggled to conquer its endemic condition of material paucity; and the ultimate society that would benevolently join the values of community to the bounty of progress. Morgan's analysis may well have appealed to DeLeon on a subliminal as well as an intellectual level, because it presented an abstract depiction of his own dilemma and outlined generally the process of its eventual resolution. The underpinnings of the Judaic community, in common with those of primordial communism, were tribal in nature and signified a low order of sophistication in productive technology. As communism was vitiated by the concomitants of technological advance, class and property, so, too, was the viability of Judaism as a community undermined by the industrial revolution and its spawn, the nation-state. At the heart, then, of DeLeon's personal striving for the socialist republic, which he had inferred to be the final stage in the Morganian system, was the unconscious desire to restore to life in society the reassuring sense of belonging formerly instilled by membership in the Jewish nation. While the established fact of industrialism required the submersion of

Jewishness per se in the more sweeping identity of the proletariat, the implicit model, the unconscious reference point, the "primitive communism" for his notion of the cooperative commonwealth remained the historic Jewish community.<sup>7</sup>

The Jewish heritage was a ubiquitous undercurrent in DeLeon's rhetoric, his propaganda work, his concept of the revolutionary party, and in the role he chose to fill in the socialist movement. For example, this basically pacific radical frequently resorted as an agitator to military analogies and metaphors of mortal combat to convey the desperate nature of the class struggle; there is in this rhetoric the brooding apparition of the gore of the Old Testament, the spectacular conflicts engaged in by the chosen people on its way to the promised land. This epic record of a people's shared past, serving as a source of guidance and faith in a common destiny, may have been the unperceived inspiration of DeLeon's gift to the American working class of a testament of its own—his translation of Sue's *Mysteries of the People*. Additionally, the DeLeonite party, the would-be nucleus of Marxism's chosen people, was definitely Mosaic, both in spirit and in practice. The exigent discipline; the liberally applied retributive justice of expulsion, bringing to mind the spectre of the vengeful Jehovah; the emphasis on doctrine, on obedience to the written law of revered texts, on thorough education in movement precepts; the pervasive aura of embattlement, of being surrounded by a hostile world; the premium placed, consequently, on the maintenance of internal unity—all betoken the emotional patrimony of Exodus. And a further, final indication of Judaism's unconscious influence on DeLeon, one disabling his conscious efforts to blend anonymously into the proletariat, was the self-assigned function he assumed in the movement, the Moses-like pose he struck as a lawgiver, going so far in that direction as to issue at one point his own decalogue.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the impulse to reenact personally the saga of the Hebrew prophet was strong enough to frame the falsehoods he spun about his past to conceal his Jewish background: the person of high station turning his back on his own kind to lead a subject class to its salvation closely parallels the story of Moses—too closely, in fact, to be dismissed plausibly as mere coincidence. That DeLeon, draped in the Mosaic mantle, found his largest and most loyal following among Jewish workers<sup>9</sup> should surprise no one.

DeLeon's failure to build a movement and to escape in the attempt what were, to him, the unacceptable implications of his past does, of

course, underline the very considerable element of tragedy in his life. But it is inadequate to speak of failure alone in assessing that life, for there is much there that is positive, uplifting, and enduring. It is difficult not to admire the selfless, courageous dedication, the steadfast commitment, the indomitability of this man who voluntarily made the cause of the world's dispossessed his own and who, unlike so many of his contemporaries on the left who scorned him, persevered in the face of personal hardship and continual disappointment to the end of his life, never recanting, never admitting defeat. If he failed to give America a thriving socialist movement, he failed where no one else has succeeded. If in the course of his endeavors he was prone to lapses of pettiness, intolerance, and dishonesty, in fairness it must be granted that his sins, such as they were, were not committed in pursuit of self-aggrandizement, and in the final analysis they simply confirm that he was, after all, merely human and vulnerable to the frailties that beset all men. Whatever his faults and his errors, DeLeon had stellar personal attributes even opponents were constrained to concede to him and which contribute much to explaining the sorrowful throngs that lined the streets of New York to pay their last respects to him as his funeral cortege drew by. A nonsocialist newspaper, impressed by the spectacle, eulogized:

When three thousand people gather in a public building to attend a funeral service . . . ; when fifty thousand line the streets through which the funeral procession passes and some of them kneel in the streets in prayer, it is evident that some one . . . unusual . . . has died. Such are the circumstances reported in connection with the funeral of Daniel DeLeon, who will be recalled as a one-time professor in Columbia University, who abandoned his profession and its emoluments to live among the plain people and work for their uplift.

There will be plenty to criticize DeLeon as there were many to mourn him. They will say he made a great mistake and wasted his life. But do men ever waste their lives when they live for their ideals, making daily sacrifices in order that they may be true to the principles in which they believe and the cause to which they have dedicated their energies? The example of their devotion offsets their errors of judgment, if they are errors. Who has mastered the problems of life sufficiently to decide certainly that this or that cause is wrong; this or that principle unsound? The man that has it in him to live for what he believes, at any cost, ought never to pass away unmourned.<sup>10</sup>



But the exemplary qualities DeLeon displayed during his life must yield in long-range significance to his accomplishments as a theoretician. Probably the most gifted and original Marxist intellectual to focus his attention on the problems attending revolution in the advanced capitalist civilization of the United States, he left an immense trove of shrewd social criticism, incisive analysis, and stimulating observation that has been little studied by American radicals and students of the left—surprisingly so in a nation without a rich Marxist tradition. His work, ranging widely over the large, perennial questions—reform and revolution, solidarity and dissent, the national party and the international movement, the trade union and the party, social change and the political process, to name but a few—provides a sound point of departure for thought directed toward humanizing modern industrial society, overcoming the alienation it has bred, and establishing within it the sense of community it so sorely lacks. This is Daniel DeLeon's legacy, and had he not lived to bequeath it, American social thought would have been much the poorer. In the longer view of history, then, the tragic burden of this Wandering Jew of American socialism is, if not lifted, certainly lightened.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

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1. The first group of respondents (n = 10) was composed of individuals who had been employed by the company for less than 1 year. This group was selected to represent new employees who might be more susceptible to organizational socialization efforts.

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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1036.

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# Notes

## Introduction

1. David Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx: From the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 186. Debs credited the DeLeon-led SLP with teaching him "many of . . . [his] early lessons in Socialist economics" (quoted in Arnold Peterson, *Daniel DeLeon: Social Architect* [New York: New York Labor News Co., 1941-53], I, 135).

2. J. B. S. Hardman, "Daniel DeLeon," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, V, 67; Paul Merlyn Buhle, "Louis C. Fraina, 1892-1953" (M.A. thesis, University of Connecticut, 1968), pp. 11-12, 22-44, 120-122; Vincent Brome, *Aneurin Bevan: A Biography* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), pp. 37-38; Michael Foot, *Aneurin Bevan: A Biography* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1962), I, 1897-1945, p. 43; Mark M. Krug, *Aneurin Bevan: Cautious Rebel* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961), p. 36; Prof. Melvyn Dubofsky to author, January 10, 1973; E. J. Hobsbawm, "Labor History and Ideology," *Journal of Social History* 7 (Summer 1974): 373; Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 275, 289, 291; Eugene D. Genovese, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History*, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1972), p. 399.

3. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 367-369. Lenin expressed the desire to have DeLeon's antireformist *Two Pages from Roman History* published in a Russian edition and offered to write the introduction to it (Lenin to N. I. Bukharin, late summer, 1920, published in V. I. Lenin, *Lenin on the United States: Selected Writings by V. I. Lenin* [New York: International Publishers, 1970], p. 536). Buhle ("Fraina," p. 43) mentions that Lenin's sympathy for Fraina was based on his view of the latter as "the shadow of Daniel DeLeon."

4. F. Gerald Ham, ed., *Records of the Socialist Labor Party of America: Guide to a Microfilm Edition*, Guides to Historical Resources (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1970), p. 18. The Society's archivists have wisely retitled the collection "The People Correspondence." Solon De-

Leon, Daniel's son, informed the author that his father did not, as a rule, retain letters or documents (Solon DeLeon to author, December 9, 1972), and on the basis of a large number of inquiries made by the author, it is clear that very few DeLeon letters exist in the manuscript collections of others.

5. George Kumler Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1965), pp. 11, 13-14, 224-226, 248-249, 231-239. Of the two motifs, Anderson found that the Legend of Malchus was the more prevalent. He also discovered that the identification of Ahasuerus with the Jewish people, which had both pro- and anti-Semitic manifestations, became especially pronounced after 1850.

6. Ibid.

### 1. The Early Quest for Identity

1. Isaac S. Emmanuel and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1970), pp. 428-429, 449, 451; Melech Epstein, *Jewish Labor in U.S.A.: An Industrial, Political and Cultural History of the Jewish Labor Movement, 1882-1914* ([New York]: Ktav Publishing House, 1969), I, 243; Oakley C. Johnson, "Foreword," to Carl Reeve, *The Life and Times of Daniel DeLeon*, AIMS Historical Series, no. 8 (New York: Humanities Press for American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1972), p. 3.

2. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 449, 456, 656; William J. Ghent, "Daniel DeLeon," *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1958 ed., III, 222.

3. This is based on DeLeon's own account, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 13-14. There appears to be no surviving record that either confirms or disproves his version of this part of the story. If he indeed entered Germany at this time, the fact doesn't appear in available immigration records (E. Tiedermann, Deutsche Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, to author, July 4, 1973; Herr Lucht, Hamburg Staatsarchiv, to author, August 15, 1973). Similarly, although some reports suggest that DeLeon received his secondary school education in Berlin, there is no evidence that he did so (E. Lockemann, Pädagogisches Zentrum, Berlin, to author, July 18, 1972, August 8, 1972, and September 5, 1972). Moreover, DeLeon did not enter a gymnasium in Amsterdam, although he subsequently pursued university studies there (Director, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst van Amsterdam, to author, September 18, 1972; H. C. van Renselaar, Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, to author, August 2, 1973). Hildesheim authorities report that they, too, have no record of DeLeon's attendance in the gymnasium there. However, attendance files are not complete, and other people with the DeLeon surname did reside in the city at the time. Hence, he could very well have attended the Hildesheim gymnasium as he claimed, possibly living with relatives (Dr. von Jan, Stadtarchiv und Stadtbibliothek Hildesheim, to author, July 25, 1972).

4. Kassian A. Kovalcheck, Jr., "Daniel DeLeon: The Rhetoric of Rationalization" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1972), pp. 8-9.

5. Director, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst van Amsterdam, to author, July 20, 1972, June 4, 1973; Solon DeLeon to author, January 29, 1973. DeLeon falsely claimed that he attended the University of Leyden in Holland (see, for example, his account quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 14). Ghent ("Daniel DeLeon," pp. 222-223) discovered that Leyden has no record of DeLeon, a fact confirmed by my investigation (L. van Hallig, Rector Magnificus, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, to Milton Halsey Thomas, March 8, 1929, Columbia University, Columbian Collection Files).

6. It is not possible to ascertain precisely the date of DeLeon's entrance into the United States. The archives of the Jewish community on Curaçao are silent on his possible periods of residence on the island after 1866 (René D. Maduro, Congregation Mikve Israel-Emanuel, to author, September 19, 1973), and the United States did not begin to regulate immigration until late in the nineteenth century (M. M. Johnson, National Archives and Records Service, to author, June 29, 1973). Customs passenger lists are similarly unhelpful (G. W., National Archives and Records Service, to author, July 17, 1973). DeLeon (quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 14) claimed that he arrived in 1872, while Ghent ("Daniel DeLeon," 223), among others, put the arrival date in 1874. See also Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 449-450; and Johnson, "Foreword," p. 4. The best evidence for an 1872 arrival date is DeLeon's petition for naturalization as an American citizen, filed in 1877, where he and a witness declared under oath that he had resided in the United States for at least the preceding five years ("In the Matter of Daniel DeLeon on His Naturalization, Affidavits, & c., Filed in Open Court, July 25, 1877," Court of Common Pleas for the City and County of New York, MSS, Record #71, Bundle 470, Records of the County Clerk, New York County Court House).

7. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 14; Charles Frederick Stansbury, "The 'Daily People' and Its Staff" (based on an interview with DeLeon), *Journalist* 27 (July 7, 1900): 89. Additional information on this phase seems to be unavailable (Georgia Donati, Mount Vernon [New York] Public Library, to author, July 2, 1973; New York Historical Society to author, June 19, 1972).

8. Solon DeLeon to author, January 29, 1973. Details are again very sketchy. Letters to local archival institutions failed to elicit further data.

9. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, p. 450.

10. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 109.

11. William O. McCagg, Jr., "Jews in Revolutions: The Hungarian Experience," *Journal of Social History* 6 (Fall 1972): 91.

12. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 449, 452. Such would have been the case in Hildesheim especially since "at the time of DeLeon's residence, it . . . was best known as a religious center, possessing many churches, both Evangelical and Catholic" (Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 8). That the experience left its mark is suggested by DeLeon's later comment that religion in Germany was "so utterly creedy, churchianic, and dogmatic that it is a positive abomination even to the students who mean to devote themselves to theology" (translator's Note, August Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, trans. Daniel DeLeon [New York: Schocken Paperbacks, 1971], p. 320).

13. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 449-450; Ghent, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 222. His father's passing may have been an especially trying loss for DeLeon, because of the predominantly patriarchal family structure of Curaçaoan Jewry; see Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*. Also see Olive M. Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon: American Socialist Pathfinder* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1935), p. 10. The Legend of the Wandering Jew was, at this time, a favored vehicle in anti-Semitic literature, particularly in Germany, and it, too, may have made a direct impact on DeLeon in this form; see Anderson, *Legend*, pp. 265, 275-278.

14. Director, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst van Amsterdam, to author, July 20, 1972; F. J. Hoogewoud, Bibliotheeca Rosenthaliana, Amsterdam, to author, August 3, 1973. The social pressures that might have spurred such involvement were lessened by the fact that DeLeon did not reside in sections of Amsterdam largely populated by Jews (director, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst van Amsterdam, to author, June 4, 1973).

15. Oakley Johnson, "Foreword," pp. 3-4; M. W. H. Schreuder, International Institute of Social History, to author, May 4, 1973.

16. Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 10.

17. Daniel DeLeon, "Should the Jews Celebrate Christmas?," *Reformer and Jewish Times* 10 (February 14, 1879): 5 (all references in the following discussion are to this citation; emphasis added). DeLeon's uneasiness about his identity was reflected in the gradual attenuation of his religious commitment. In 1884 he resigned his membership in the family synagogue in Curaçao rather than pay a modest annual contribution (Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, p. 451). Moreover, there is no evidence that he affiliated with a congregation in New York (Joseph I. Tarica, Congregation Shearith Israel, to author, July 10, 1972), and his son (born in 1883) reported that the faith was not observed at any time in the home (Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973). A contributing factor in this development was DeLeon's dissimilarity, in terms of both culture and experience, to most New York Jews of the period. He had been a Reform Jew, born in the New World to a relatively prosperous family and raised in the Sephardic rite, and he had rapidly assimilated into the dominant American society upon his arrival in the United States. They were predominantly Orthodox and Ashkenazic in their faith, and they had for the most part migrated from the poverty-stricken ghettos of Eastern Europe to separate, Yiddish-speaking, working-class enclaves in their adopted country (Prof. Moses Rischin to author, November 3, 1972; Ronald Sanders, *The Downtown Jews: Portraits of an Immigrant Generation* [New York: Harper & Row, 1969], p. 165).

18. McCagg ("Jews in Revolutions," pp. 92-94) has noted similar instances of "emotion-laden strivings" leading to "identity reduction" and "inverse nationalism" among Jewish political figures in Hungary at approximately the same time, indicating that DeLeon's experience was but one example of a general sociological process.

19. Daniel DeLeon, review of *Handbuch des Völkerrechts*, II, III, edited by Franz von Holtzendorff, and *Introduction au Droit de Gens*, by Franz de Holt-



zendorff and Alphonse Rivier, in *Political Science Quarterly* 4 (March 1889): 196.

20. Herreshoff (*Disciples*, p. 108) also recognizes that the origins of DeLeon's nationalism lay in his period of residence in Europe and that his interest in Latin American matters was natural for him, but his treatment differs from the one presented here.

21. Oakley Johnson, "Foreword," p. 3.

22. Ghent, "Daniel DeLeon," 223; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 14. Unfortunately, there appear to be no supplementary and corroborative data on this phase of DeLeon's life (New York Historical Society to author, June 19, 1972).

23. Solon DeLeon, quoted in Oakley Johnson, "Foreword," p. 4. Waldo Frank ("The Lesson of Daniel DeLeon: A Chart for a New Political Philosophy," *Commentary* 4 [July 1947]: 44) avers that DeLeon's Spanish "helped him" in his Texas practice.

24. Lewis Hanke, "The First Lecturer on Hispanic American Diplomatic History in the United States," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 16 (August 1936): 399; Daniel DeLeon, review of *Handbuch des Völkerrechts*, I, *Einleitung in das Völkerrecht*, by Franz von Holtzendorff, in *Political Science Quarterly* 1 (June 1886): 346-347.

25. Columbia College, *Handbook of Information as to the Course of Instruction, etc., etc.*, in *Columbia College and Its Several Schools* (New York, 1885), p. 206; Daniel DeLeon, "The Conference at Berlin on the West African Question," *Political Science Quarterly* 1 (March 1886): 104; Hanke, "First Lecturer," 401.

26. DeLeon, "Conference at Berlin," 138. For the Germanic character of the pre-DeLeon SLP and DeLeon's early attitudes toward German Marxism, see Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 114, 137, respectively; for the traditional deference shown toward DeLeon's intellectual abilities by the German-American socialists, see Howard H. Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement*, 2nd ed., The American Heritage Series (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), pp. 144-145.

27. DeLeon, "Conference at Berlin," pp. 125, 123-124, 139.

## 2. University Years

1. Columbia College, *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Columbia College, 1878-1879* (New York, 1878), School of Law separate issue, pp. 36, 24; Columbia (General) *Catalogue*, 1876-1877, p. 144, 1877-1878, pp. 149, 170; Alice H. Bonnell, Curator, Columbiana Collection, Columbia University, to author, April 25, 1972.

2. DeLeon's efforts to remedy his sense of isolation may have made the study of political subjects, as a means to that end, especially attractive. In any case, this study must have led him to another, more strictly political avenue of escape from the dilemma he faced, as subsequent events suggest. The increasingly political character of his quest will receive sustained treatment in the next chapter.

3. *Columbia Catalogue*, 1878-1879, School of Law separate issue, p. 28; *Columbia (General) Catalogue*, 1877-1878, pp. 175-176; *New York World*, May 15, 1878, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 14-15. Barnard would later have cause to rue this praise.

4. Ralph Gordon Hoxie et al., *A History of the Faculty of Political Science*, part of the *Bicentennial History of Columbia University*, ed. by Dwight C. Miner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 30, 41-42; Columbia College, "Minutes of the Trustees," Meeting of June 5, 1882, MSS in Columbiana Collection, Columbia University; *Columbia Handbook*, 1885, p. 213.

5. Columbia College, "Minutes of the Faculty of the School of Political Science," Meeting of June 8, 1883, MSS in Columbiana Collection, Columbia University. DeLeon's false Ph.B. from Leyden seems to have been inflated by him to a Ph.D. for the purpose of the competition, for the minutes list him as a holder of that degree. Thereafter he was often referred to as "Dr."

6. Increasing this elation at having "arrived" may have been the high social status that DeLeon felt attached to the teaching vocation. At the time that he was a gymnasium student in Germany, the educational system there was undergoing a reform which raised the status of teachers to that of judges and high civil servants (Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 9). Perhaps this had an effect on his view of the meaning of his appointment years later.

7. Alice H. Bonnell to author, May 14, 1973, July 12, 1973, July 26, 1973; *Columbia Handbook*, 1884, p. 212; 1885, p. 216; Daniel DeLeon, "Letter Box" reply, *Daily People*, October 9, 1904, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 16; Hoxie, *History*, p. 30. The high regard in which DeLeon was held at the time can be gauged from the fact that his appointment only called for him to give his course one semester per year, but as stated, it came to be given twice yearly, and his remuneration was increased accordingly.

8. "About College," *Columbia Spectator*, January 23, 1885, p. 127; Hoxie, *History*, p. 41; Alice H. Bonnell to author, July 27, 1972; "Literature," *Columbia Spectator*, February 24, 1886, p. 13; DeLeon, "Conference at Berlin," 103-139; Hoxie, *History*, pp. 42, 30; Faculty Minutes, May 28, 1886; Trustees Minutes, June 7, 1886.

9. DeLeon's involvement with the George movement will be analyzed more fully in the following chapter.

10. Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon*, pp. 10-11.

11. Columbia University, Committee on General Catalogue, *Alumni Register, 1754-1931* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 1086-1087; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 15-16. In DeLeon's day, the School of Law was located at Lafayette Place and Great Jones Street "so as to be nearer to the business portion of the city" (Columbia University, *A History of Columbia University, 1754-1904* [New York: The Columbia University Press, 1904], p. 346).

12. *Columbia Handbook*, 1884, pp. 192-193.

13. Letter, F. A. P. Barnard to Hamilton Fish, October 27, 1886, Columbia University, Hamilton Fish Papers.

14. MSS in College Papers, Columbian Collection, Columbia University.

15. Trustees Minutes, November 1, 1886. If there was any discussion of the resolution, it was not recorded.

16. Hoxie, *History*, p. 31.

17. DeLeon, "Letter Box" reply, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 16; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 113-114. The official record on this matter is understandably silent (Alice H. Bonnell to author, May 14, 1973, July 12, 1973).

18. Letter, DeLeon to E. R. A. Seligman, March 1, 1887, Columbia University, E. R. A. Seligman Papers. DeLeon's skepticism about students may have stemmed in part from the fact that Columbia students largely backed Republican Theodore Roosevelt in the 1886 mayoralty campaign. However, after he had established himself as a major voice in the American socialist movement, college students wrote him for advice on debate topics and requested that he serve as a debate judge; one student even wrote to complain about one of his professors who was "unscientific" and "inconsistent and confusing in his views," because he stubbornly maintained that professors were not wage slaves. The professor in question was John R. Commons, later a noted labor economist and pioneer labor historian (Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 18, 42). Such communications probably confirmed DeLeon in his belief that the correct path for him lay outside the academy, even when it involved reaching those within.

19. J. Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon—Fighter for Socialism in the American Labor Movement," from *The Day*, December 28, 29, 31, 1952, trans. from the Yiddish by Louis Lazarus, New York, 1960, p. 1, MSS in Tamiment Collection, Bobst Library, New York University. Schlossberg, a friend of DeLeon, recalled the latter's statement to this effect from a conversation the two had had sometime after DeLeon had joined the socialist movement.

20. Daniel DeLeon, "The Voice of Madison," *Nationalist* 1 (August 1889), in Daniel DeLeon, *Americanism* (New York: The Industrial Union Party, 1935), p. 16; "May Day in New York. Under the Banner of Socialism," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 10, 1890; Daniel DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1947), p. 5. See also Daniel DeLeon, "What Shall We Do with a College Professor," *Daily People*, February 8, 1909, in Daniel DeLeon, *Marxian Science and the Colleges* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1966), p. 75.

21. Report of a 1907 DeLeon speech, in Alfred G. Sanftleben, *Appreciations* (Los Angeles: By the Author, 1907), p. 15; *People*, February 19, 1893, quoted in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 141; DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, pp. 59, 61, 77-78; Daniel DeLeon, *Socialist vs. Capitalist Economics: Marx on Mallock* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1963); Daniel DeLeon, *Vulgar Economy: Or a Critical Analyst of Marx Analyzed* (New York: National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1914).

22. Daniel DeLeon, "America's Universities," *Daily People*, February 22, 1905, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, p. 70; Daniel DeLeon, "The Pickpocket Trick," *Daily People*, January 19, 1904, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, pp. 63-64.

23. "November 11. New York Socialists Honoring the Chicago Martyrs," *Workmen's Advocate*, November 15, 1890; DeLeon, "Pickpocket Trick," p. 64; Daniel DeLeon, "One More Rip," *Daily People*, February 12, 1904, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, pp. 66-67; *People*, January 4, 1894, quoted in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 141; Daniel DeLeon, "Another Curiosity," *Daily People*, August 29, 1913, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, p. 85.

24. Daniel DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1965), pp. 1-2; Daniel DeLeon, *The Ballot and the Class Struggle* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1947), pp. 4, 11, 17, 18.

25. DeLeon, "America's Universities," pp. 69-73.

### 3. Political Evolution

1. Daniel DeLeon, *Two Pages from Roman History* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1943), p. 5.

2. DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 34; Daniel DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies to Geo. K. Lloyd—He Never Was a Land Taxer," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 22, 1890.

3. DeLeon, "Should the Jews Celebrate Christmas?"

4. John M. Dobson, *Politics in the Gilded Age: A New Perspective on Reform* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 124-127, 140; Hanke, "First Lecturer," 401; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 108; Gerald W. McFarland, "The New York Mugwumps of 1884: A Profile," *Political Science Quarterly* 78 (March 1963): 40. DeLeon's support of Cleveland has been generally misinterpreted by historians, who have seen it as evidence that he was a stalwart conservative Democrat at this time; see, for example, Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 108 and Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 16. The source for this misinformation was probably contemporary polemical literature written by DeLeon's enemies, who were anxious to associate him with New York's hated Tammany machine; see Quint, *Forging*, pp. 337-338; N. I. Stone, *The Attitude of the Socialists toward the Trade Unions: An Address Delivered at the National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party at Rochester, N.Y., on March 28, 1900* (New York: The Volks-zeitung Library, 1900), p. 10.

5. Hoxie, *History*, p. 43; McFarland, "Mugwumps," p. 55. DeLeon was far from being the only member of the School of Political Science to embrace mugwumpery. Professor Frederick Whitridge, for instance, was a member of the independent committee's executive and may well have recruited DeLeon, and graduate student Frederic Bancroft, later a noted historian and quite possibly one of DeLeon's students at the time, served as an office staff volunteer; see McFarland, "Mugwumps," pp. 46-47.

6. McFarland, "Mugwumps," p. 40.

7. Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, abridged ed. (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1970); Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 111; Louis F. Post and Fred C. Leubuscher, *Henry George's 1886 Campaign: An Account of the George-Hewitt Campaign in the New York Municipal Election of 1886* (New

York: Henry George School of Social Science, 1961), pp. 13-15; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 38-50.

8. F. A. P. Barnard to Hamilton Fish, October 27, 1886, Fish Papers; Henry George, Jr., *The Life of Henry George* (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1960), pp. 491-495; Lester Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon and the Movement for Social Reform, 1886-1896" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1939), pp. 6-7, 10-12, 20; Post and Leubuscher, *Campaign*, pp. 15-16; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 43, 143.

9. See, for example: Albert Fried, ed., *Socialism in America from the Shakers to the Third International: A Documentary History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1970), p. 192; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 109-110; Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon*, pp. 10-11; Lillian Symes and Travers Clement, *Rebel America: The Story of Social Revolt in the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 188.

10. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 5; Daniel DeLeon, *Report of the Socialist Labor Party of the United States to the International Socialist Workingmen's Congress, Opened August 6th, 1893, in Zürich, Switzerland* (n.p., n.d.), p. 3; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 21.

11. "The Movement: Intellectual Forces at Work throughout the Country . . . In Yonkers," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 1, 1890.

12. Geo. K. Lloyd, "The Single Tax and the United Labor Party," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 15, 1890; DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies." DeLeon continued to deny that he had ever been a single-taxer and to insist that he had only supported George because the latter seemed at the time to represent proletarian interests; see Stansbury, " 'Daily People,' " 89.

13. *New York Tribune*, October 2, 1886, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, p. 115; DeLeon to E. R. A. Seligman, March 1, 1887, Seligman Papers; Sanders, *Downtown Jews*, p. 166; Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 11.

14. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 39-41, 143; James Dombrowski, *The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 46, 48; George, Jr., *Life of Henry George*, p. 465; Post and Leubuscher, *Campaign*, p. 16.

15. As a Socialist, DeLeon came to detest being addressed as "Professor" and was extremely critical of others in the movement who set themselves off from the rank and file as "intellectuals." The significance of this will be analyzed in a later chapter, but the contrast casts in bold relief the genteel self-image DeLeon maintained during his single-tax period.

16. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 114-116.

17. DeLeon to Seligman, March 1, 1887; Henry David, *The History of the Haymarket Affair: A Study in the American Social-Revolutionary and Labor Movements* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 347. As will be discussed at a later point, DeLeon's attitude toward the Haymarket matter continued to have a distinctly mugwump quality about it even after he had committed himself to socialism.

18. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 21; DeLeon, *Report to International*

*Socialist Congress, 1893*, p. 3.

19. Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 1; Socialist Labor Party, "Daniel DeLeon: Editor, *Daily and Weekly People*," in Socialist Labor Party, *The Party Press, 1900-1904* (New York: Socialist Labor Party, n.d.), unpaginated.

20. DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies."

21. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 21; Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, ed. Robert C. Elliott (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Riverside Editions, 1966); Quint, *Forging*, pp. 75-77.

22. The foregoing summary is based on Quint, *Forging*, pp. 72-102.

23. Cyrus F. Willard, ed., "News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 2 (January 1890): 75.

24. Daniel DeLeon, "Karl Marx," *Daily People*, May 4, 1913, in Daniel DeLeon, *James Madison and Karl Marx: A Contrast and a Similarity*, 3rd ed. (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1932), p. 26.

25. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 12. For a thorough treatment of the Knights, see: Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895: A Study in Democracy* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1964).

26. For instance: Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 111-112; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 120-122.

27. Frederick Engels, "The Labor Movement in the United States," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Letters to Americans, 1848-1895: A Selection*, ed. Alexander Trachtenberg (New York: International Publishers, New World Paperbacks, 1963), pp. 288-289.

28. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 20-22.

29. Daniel DeLeon, "A Criticism of the Single Tax," *Twentieth Century* 2 (February 2, 1889): 31. DeLeon's by-line to the piece found him still brandishing his "Ph.D." title as a badge of respectability.

30. Ironically, as will be shown below, it was this very characteristic of the Nationalist movement that contributed to DeLeon's eventual disillusionment with it as his ideas sharpened and became more definite.

31. See Quint, *Forging*, pp. 103-141, for a brief account of Christian Socialism.

32. Dombrowski, *Christian Socialism*, p. 101; Charles Howard Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915*, Yale Studies in Religious Education, vol. 14 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 176; Arthur Mann, *Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age: Social Reform in Boston, 1880-1900* (New York: Harper & Row, Torchbooks, 1966), p. 91. As both Dombrowski (p. 101) and Hopkins (p. 175) report, the president of the subsequently established New York Society of Christian Socialists was the Reverend R. Heber Newton, who had previously worked with DeLeon in the Henry George campaign. DeLeon's involvement with the Christian Socialists was perhaps the political realization of the desire, expressed in his 1879 letter to the *Reformer and Jewish Times*, for amalgamation in the larger entity of Christian America. His further tendency in this direction was indicated by the references made to Christ in the closing statement of his "A Criticism of the Single Tax," quoted above.

33. "Humbugology. Gunton on the Rack at the Liberal Club," *Workmen's Advocate*, January 18, 1890. DeLeon continued to be referred to as "Professor DeLeon," here and in most other reports of his activities in the movement. Even as late as September 1890, shortly before he formally joined the Socialist Labor Party, he assisted in the organization of a Nationalist club in the silk-stocking district of Fifth Avenue, to which "many wealthy ladies . . . [were] contributing" ("News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 3 [September 1890]: 113).

34. "New York Notes," *Workmen's Advocate*, July 20, 1889; "Labor Lyceum," *Workmen's Advocate*, August 3, 1889.

35. DeLeon, "Voice of Madison," pp. 19-20. DeLeon made the same point in his speeches; see "Humbugology. Gunton on the Rack," and "Equality of Wealth," *Workmen's Advocate*, June 26, 1890.

36. "News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 2 (March 1890): 148; "School Conference," "Organized Labor: Weekly Meetings of the Central Labor Union," both in *Workmen's Advocate*, January 11, 1890; "Give Us Schools: Indignation Growing in Volume and Power," *Workmen's Advocate*, February 22, 1890.

37. Daniel DeLeon, "The Eleventh Census Conspiracy," *Nationalist* 2 (February 1890): 85-90; "The Boston Herald vs. Prof. DeLeon," *Nationalist* 2 (April 1890): 171-173; "The Census Conspiracy," *Nationalist* 2 (May 1890): 203-204; "The Census Conspiracy," *Workmen's Advocate*, April 5, 1890.

38. The reasons for this will be the subject of the next chapter.

39. Quoted in "The Movement: Intellectual Forces at Work throughout the Country . . . In New York. Public Meeting of the American Section—A Lecture on 'The Unemployed' by Prof. DeLeon," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 1, 1890.

40. Later DeLeon would only affirm the validity of "successful revolution."

41. Daniel DeLeon, "Nationalism—Aspirations That Gave It Birth and Forces That Give It Strength," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 15, 1890. Even late in November, after he had cast his lot with the Socialist Labor Party, the term "social reformer" still had not become an epithet in DeLeon's vocabulary; see "Hugh O. Pentecost. His Platform Analyzed at Club No. 3," *Workmen's Advocate*, December 6, 1890.

42. Quoted in "November 11. New York Socialists Honoring the Chicago Martyrs," *Workmen's Advocate*, November 15, 1890.

43. See, for example, the report, "Labor Lyceum," cited above.

44. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 87-88.

45. "The 'Radical' Club," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 31, 1890; "The Radical Club Again," *Workmen's Advocate*, June 14, 1890.

46. "News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 3 (September 1890): 113; Domrowski, *Christian Socialism*, p. 101.

47. "The 'Citizens,'" *Workmen's Advocate*, June 21, 1890. DeLeon's description of the social composition of the "Citizens" is strongly reminiscent of one contained in a campaign speech he had made for Henry George nearly four years before (quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 114-115), the target

then being the city's conservative elements. Consequently, it is a measure of the distance covered in DeLeon's leftward movement that he would now apply virtually the same description to liberals.

48. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 87-89.

49. "A Lecture on 'The Unemployed' by Prof. DeLeon"; DeLeon, "Nationalism."

50. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 88-89, 94; H. G., "Nationalist Club No. 3. Closing Lecture of the Season—Are We Ready for Nationalism?," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 31, 1890.

51. "The 'Citizens.' "

52. "News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 3 (September 1890): 112-113.

53. "John Swinton: Greeted by Three Thousand Toilers," *Workmen's Advocate*, October 18, 1890.

54. "Two Conferences: New York Nationalists Issue a Call. They Appoint the 10th of July with a View to Cooperation with the Conference to Be Held on the Same Day under the Auspices of the Socialist Labor Party," *Workmen's Advocate*, July 12, 1890; "Political Action: The Progressive Forces at Work," *Workmen's Advocate*, July 19, 1890; "Nationalists Join Bona-fide Organized Labor in a Body—Honest Workmen as the Representatives of the Progressive Element—Ringling Speeches and Great Enthusiasm," "Nationalist Club No. 3. Daniel DeLeon Delivers a Lecture on 'The Commonwealth Party; Its Rise, Decline and Fall,' " both in *Workmen's Advocate*, October 4, 1890; "First Gun of the Campaign," "The Nationalists Repudiating the Commonwealth Party," both in *Workmen's Advocate*, September 13, 1890; "The Nationalists. Their Central Committee Declares That It Has No Power—The Clubs Can Do as They Please," *Workmen's Advocate*, September 20, 1890.

55. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 23; Quint, *Forging*, p. 86; Report from W. C. Temple, Club Secretary pro tem, in "News of the Movement," *Nationalist* 1 (May 1889): 23; Oakley C. Johnson, "The First Marxist Party in the U.S.A.," *Political Affairs* 43 (September 1964), 49.

56. See, for example, the following *Workmen's Advocate* reports of meetings: "A Lecture on 'The Unemployed' by Prof. DeLeon"; "Celebrate the Victory," March 8, 1890; "Current Events. As Viewed from a Socialist Observatory," April 26, 1890; "May Day in New York. Under the Banner of Socialism," May 10, 1890. Also see DeLeon, "Nationalism."

57. DeLeon, "Nationalism." The phrase was used in a proud review of the organizational accomplishment of the Nationalist clubs.

58. "Daniel DeLeon Delivers a Lecture on 'The Commonwealth Party; Its Rise, Decline and Fall' "; "Socialism in New Haven. 'What is Socialism' Explained from the Platform and the Pulpit," *Workmen's Advocate*, December 20, 1890; *People*, May 29, 1898, in Quint, *Forging*, p. 73; *Weekly People*, February 10, 1906, in Louis Lazarus, "Origins of DeLeonist Thought," *DeLeonist* 1 (September-October 1969): 17.

59. "Daniel DeLeon Delivers a Lecture on 'The Commonwealth Party; Its Rise, Decline and Fall' "; *People*, February 11, 1894, in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 33.



60. "Daniel DeLeon Delivers a Lecture on 'The Commonwealth Party; Its Rise, Decline and Fall' "; "Nationalist Club No. 3," *Workmen's Advocate*, November 29, 1890; "Hugh O. Pentecost."

61. Thomas C. Brophy, "Editorial Notes," *Socialist Annual for 1894* (Boston: State Central Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1894), p. 30.

#### 4. The Turn to Marxism

1. Solon DeLeon to author, December 9, 1972. Although it can't be determined precisely, it would seem that DeLeon first encountered the novel sometime between 1886 and 1889, when he was steeping himself in left-wing literature.

2. Oakley C. Johnson and Carl Reeve, *Writings by and about Daniel DeLeon: A Bibliography*, Bibliographical Series no. 3 (New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1966), pp. 7-10. Seventeen of the nineteen were translated by DeLeon, and the others, by his son Solon. Several of the novels run to more than one volume.

3. Anderson, *Legend*, pp. 231, 236, 239.

4. Daniel DeLeon, *Socialism versus Anarchism: A Lecture Delivered at Boston, October 13, 1901* (New York: The National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1921), p. 3; Daniel DeLeon, "Horrible Example of 16 to 1 Mental Training," November 14, 1909, in Daniel DeLeon, *Evolution of a Liberal: From Reform to Reaction* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1965), pp. 14-15; *Daily People*, February 22, 1913, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 44. Perhaps mindful of William's fate, DeLeon named one of his own sons after Genseric, the legendary Goth who "had forced the Pope to kiss his toe" (Solon DeLeon, quoted in Oakley C. Johnson, "Foreword," to Reeve, *Life and Times*, p. 6).

5. These were subsequently collected in pamphlet form; see Daniel DeLeon, *Fifteen Questions about Socialism* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1967).

6. These editorials were republished together under DeLeon's name in a pamphlet entitled *Father Gassoniana, or Jesuit "Sociology" and "Economics" at the Bar of Science and History* (1911).

7. Daniel DeLeon, *Abolition of Poverty: Socialist versus Ultramontane Economics and Politics* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1945), p. 43 (a later, retitled edition of *Father Gassoniana*, cited in note 6); Daniel DeLeon, "The Universal Monarchy," *Daily People*, October 1, 1913, in Daniel DeLeon, *The Vatican in Politics: Ultramontanism, The Roman Catholic Political Machine in Action* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1962), p. 55; Daniel DeLeon, "Our Allies the Ultramontanes," *Daily People*, January 5, 1914, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 76; Daniel DeLeon, "Is It Fair?" *Daily People*, November 21, 1913, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 57; Daniel DeLeon, "Father Vaughan," *Daily People*, February 29, 1912, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 38; Daniel DeLeon, "The 'Index,'" *Daily People*, December 25, 1913, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 64; Daniel DeLeon, "Ultramon-

tane Riot in Butte," *Daily People*, June 12, 1912, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 50. At one point in his assaults on the repressiveness of the church, DeLeon significantly mentioned, as an example of its suppression of the intellect, Church condemnation of Sue's historical novels; see DeLeon, "The 'Index,' " p. 63.

8. Daniel DeLeon, "Well for the Men of Neff!" *Daily People*, January 2, 1911, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, pp. 30-31; DeLeon, "Father Vaughan," p. 37; Daniel DeLeon, "American Aglipayans," *Daily People*, May 24, 1911, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 36; Daniel DeLeon, "Socialism Complimented," *Daily People*, June 26, 1912, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 51; Daniel DeLeon, "So Say We All," *Daily People*, January 1, 1914, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 68.

9. Daniel DeLeon, "The Case of Father Travassos," *Daily People*, October 19, 1909, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, pp. 27-28; DeLeon, "Well for the Men of Neff!" p. 30; DeLeon, *Abolition of Poverty*, p. 40.

10. DeLeon, *Abolition of Poverty*, pp. 44-45.

11. DeLeon, "Ultramontane Riot in Butte," p. 48.

12. Daniel DeLeon, "An Open Letter," *Daily People*, April 24, 1912, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, pp. 41-42; DeLeon, "Socialism Complimented," p. 53.

13. Ella Reeve Bloor, *We Are Many: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1940), p. 58.

14. Buhle, "Fraina," p. 5; Daniel DeLeon and James Connolly, "Wages, Marriage and the Church: A Discussion Initiated by James Connolly, and Answered by the Editor of The People," *Weekly People*, April 9, 1904. The conflict between the two men over the church and other issues did not end here but later carried into the IWW, climaxing in a special general executive board meeting in December 1907, which was convened at DeLeon's request so that his charges of error and wrongdoing against Connolly could be heard. DeLeon presented there a "chain of evidence" that attempted to link Connolly to what he regarded as the domination of the Catholic Church over affairs in the labor movement. Apparently these allegations concerning the church were so intemperate that the editors of the union organ, the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, refused to publish them in the minutes for fear of a libel suit. See "Katz Takes Exception and Trautmann Answers," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, February 8, 1908.

15. Anderson, *Legend*, p. 235. Emphasis added.

16. DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 26; Daniel DeLeon, "Universal Modernism," *Weekly People*, March 25, 1911, quoted in David Goldstein and Martha Moore Avery, *Socialism: The Nation of Fatherless Children*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Thomas J. Flynn & Co., 1911), p. 22. "Amazing contradictions" aptly describes the content of DeLeon's ideology during his Nationalist phase, as demonstrated in the preceding chapter. This would suggest that his observation here, while generally phrased, derived from a certain awareness of the dynamic of his own personal development.

17. DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, pp. 7-8; DeLeon, "Universal Mod-

ernism," quoted in Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 22.

18. *People*, February 4, 1904, in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 188; DeLeon, *Fifteen Questions*, p. 37; Daniel DeLeon, "America's Universities," *Daily People*, February 22, 1905, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, p. 73; Daniel DeLeon and Thomas F. Carmody, *Socialism vs. "Individualism": Debate: Daniel DeLeon vs. Thomas F. Carmody*, Troy, N.Y., April 14, 1912 (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1942), p. 34; DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress, 1893*, p. 3; Daniel DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society: The Industrial Vote* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1968), p. 57; *People*, May 26, 1895, in Charles M. White, "The Socialist Labor Party, 1890-1903" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1959), p. 216.

19. Daniel DeLeon and Job Harriman, *The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance versus the "Pure and Simple" Trade Union: A Debate Held at the Grand Opera House, New Haven, Conn., November 25, 1900* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1900), p. 7; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 10; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 27. For a like assessment by another contemporary commentator, see John Timm, "Daniel DeLeon as a Campaigner," in Socialist Labor Party, *Fifty Years of American Marxism, 1891-1914: Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the WEEKLY PEOPLE* (New York: Socialist Labor Party of America, 1941), p. 26.

20. Bertha C. DeLeon, "The 'Nineties with DeLeon," in Socialist Labor Party, *Fifty Years*, p. 22. DeLeon married Bertha Canary in 1892. She further remarked here that the use of slang in one's writing was quite unconventional at the time.

21. Slang expressions were largely absent from DeLeon's presocialist writings. An accomplished linguist, he probably viewed them as but another language to be mastered. That their inclusion in his generally formal, erudite passages at times made their usage appear strained and artificial seems not to have bothered him.

22. Daniel DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies to Geo. K. Lloyd—He Never Was a Land Taxer," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 22, 1890; Daniel DeLeon, *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism: A Lecture Delivered at Newark, N.J., April 21, 1904* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1960), p. 42; Daniel DeLeon, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1929), p. 7. Also see pp. 14, 22, 23, 91, 97, 170 and 191 of the latter for other examples in a typical DeLeon piece. The last reference confirms that DeLeon's use of slang was deliberate and purposeful, but it also indicates that he occasionally found it necessary to transcend the constraints of colloquial language in order to express a thought precisely. Reform and revolution, he stated there, were " 'horses of different color,' or, dropping slang, children of different parents" (emphasis added).

23. Daniel DeLeon, "Apropos of 'Direct Action,'" *Daily People*, April 2, 1913, in Daniel DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism: Selected Editorials* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1944), p. 69; Daniel DeLeon, "Bandyng 'Traitor!' in the Senate," *People*, May 15, 1898, in Daniel DeLeon, *Capitalism Means*

War! (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1947), p. 23.

24. See, for example, DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 13-14. He spoke of Ward here as "one of our great men, a really great man, a man whom I consider a glory to the United States" and one "with the master hand of genius."

25. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 150. DeLeon held the "Aristophanes of America," as he called Ward, in such high esteem that he wrote an article about him in the *Daily People* ("Artemus Ward: His Place in American History as an Agent of Civilization," in the issue for September 22, 1907) and was, at the time of his death, planning to deliver a lecture on Ward's humor that was to have been stenographically reported for publication (Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 151).

26. See, for example, the leaflet *Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan* (New York: Socialist Labor Party, n.d.), dealing with the class struggle; "Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan," *People*, June 26, 1898, on the Spanish-American War; "Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan," *Weekly People*, March 28, 1903, also published in leaflet form under DeLeon's name with the title, "Americanism" (New York: Socialist Labor Party, n.d.); "Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan," *Daily People*, March 17, 1907, on the meaning of taxes; and Daniel DeLeon, *Socialist Economics in Dialogue* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1935), a book-length collection of these dialogues. The curious mixture of the Socratic dialogue form—certainly a vestige of DeLeon's classical training and pedagogical background—and the informal speech patterns of the common man again suggests an Ahasuerus figure striving to reconcile unlike elements of past and unfolding future by means of a synthesis. Such is also reflected in DeLeon's description of Artemus Ward as the "Aristophanes of America," quoted in the preceding note.

27. Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 222-225; George Simpson, "The American Karl Marx," *American Mercury* 33 (September 1934): 65. Although Solon denied it in the above-cited letter, his father probably augmented his meager income by preparing briefs on international law cases for his friend, Benjamin Patterson, the Party's attorney. Petersen (*Daniel DeLeon*, II, 296-297), a close associate, states that it was so, and DeLeon himself implied as much in a letter written a few months before his death (Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 225). It is difficult to understand how else he could have managed.

28. Bertha DeLeon, "'Nineties with DeLeon,'" p. 18; Johnson, "Foreword," p. 5; Solon DeLeon to author, February 8, 1973, April 13, 1973; Daniel DeLeon to Neil Maclean, June 27, 1907, facsimile reproduction in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 38-39; see also pp. 224-225 of the latter.

29. Olive M. Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," in Socialist Labor Party, *Daniel DeLeon, The Man and His Work: A Symposium*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1969), I, 101; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 115; Joseph Schlossberg, *The Workers and Their World: Aspects of the Workers' Struggle at Home and Abroad* (New York: A.L.P. Committee, Local 25, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1935), p. 83.

30. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 58. DeLeon also made reference to poverty as the "badge" of the proletariat in his *As to Politics, and a Discussion upon the Relative Importance of Political Action and of Classconscious Economic Action, and the Urgent Necessity of Both* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1945), pp. 116-117.

31. Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," pp. 101-102.

32. DeLeon, *Socialist vs. Capitalist Economics*, p. 45. As will be seen in the succeeding chapter, DeLeon's anti-individualism was one of the factors underlying his insistence on strict party discipline.

33. DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, p. 15. "Society," in DeLeon's mind, was virtually synonymous with the working class, whose "numerical preponderance" in it was "overwhelming" (DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 15).

34. DeLeon believed that the working class could "safely count" on "reinforcements from the middle and kindred hard-pushed social layers." He opined: "Justified is the expectation that big chunks of that [middle] class will hearken the summons" (DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 15).

35. Daniel DeLeon, *Address Issued by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, in Semi-Annual Session Convened, New York, January 4, 1909* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1909), p. 13.

36. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 15.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 109. He asserted here that such a party "must have room within its camp for all the desirable social elements whose occupation excludes them from bona fide membership in the Industrial Workers of the World."

38. The platform DeLeon wrote for the SLP in 1912, for example, "calls upon all intelligent citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of Working Class interests, and join us in this mighty and noble work of human emancipation" ("Socialist Labor Party Platform, Adopted by the National Convention of the Party, April 10, 1912," in Socialist Labor Party, *The Socialist Movement: Brief Outline of Its Development and Differences in This Country* [New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1915], p. 15).

39. DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies"; "Hugh O. Pentecost. His Platform Analyzed at Club No. 3," *Workmen's Advocate*, December 6, 1890; DeLeon, *Address*, p. 13; John Timm, "The Role of the Party Press," in Socialist Labor Party, *Fifty Years*, p. 4; Socialist Labor Party, *Disruption and Disrupters* (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1935), p. 33.

40. DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, pp. 43-44; "Hugh O. Pentecost"; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 13; Daniel DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism," *Daily People*, January 20, 1913, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 49; DeLeon, "Apropos of 'Direct Action,'" p. 69; Daniel DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," *Daily People*, April 13, 1913, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 78.

41. DeLeon, "Karl Marx," pp. 25, 27, 30.

42. "Siberian Crimes. Speeches That the Czar Could Not Suppress," *Workmen's Advocate*, March 8, 1890; Socialist Labor Party, *Golden Jubilee of DeLeonism, 1890-1940: Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Socialist Labor Party* (New York: Socialist Labor Party of America,

1940), p. 22; Daniel DeLeon, "A Word to the Proletariat of Spain," *People*, March 20, 1898, in DeLeon, *Capitalism Means War!*, p. 29; Daniel DeLeon, "The National Honor," *People*, March 6, 1898, in DeLeon, *Capitalism Means War!*, p. 19.

43. "Hugh O. Pentecost." It should be recalled that DeLeon's academic training had given him a sense of history and a disposition to see patterns and "laws" in its flow, making this aspect of Marxism all the more congenial.

44. Daniel DeLeon, "Notes on the Stuttgart Congress, IV: Progress in Self-Reliance," *Daily People*, October 27, 1907. DeLeon had used virtually the same "stars" and "'supes'" phrasing to express this thought in *Socialism vs. Anarchism* (p. 12).

45. DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 4. This notion was echoed several years later, employing the same metaphor. (See the report "Daniel DeLeon Lectures," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, March 9, 1907.) Its recurrence evinces how deeply imbued DeLeon was with the sense of being absorbed in the historical process.

46. Daniel DeLeon, *Anti-Semitism: Its Cause and Cure* (New York: National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1921), pp. 25-26. Earlier, in 1889, Nationalism had been viewed in the same light, evidencing the impact of Marx even at that point. A report of a DeLeon speech read: "Prof. DeLeon, in the course of an eloquent speech, said the Nationalist movement is the latest development of an old cause, whose beginning is lost in the distant past" ("Nationalism. Boston, Who Gave It Birth, Celebrates Its First Anniversary," *Workmen's Advocate*, December 28, 1889). A year later, after DeLeon's Nationalism had finally crystallized as Marxian socialism, one of his lecture audiences was given a historical survey of man's search for the just and equitable society, this time with socialism being presented as its ultimate reward ("Socialism in New Haven: 'What Is Socialism' Explained from the Platform and the Pulpit," *Workmen's Advocate*, December 20, 1890).

47. Daniel DeLeon, "Preface to the Translation," of Eugène Sue, *The Brass Bell, or the Chariot of Death: A Tale of Caesar's Gallic Invasion*, trans. Solon DeLeon (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1907), p. 5; Solon DeLeon to author, December 9, 1972, February 8, 1973; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 4.

48. Solon felt that his father did not translate Sue's *The Wandering Jew* or seek its distribution by the Party mainly because "it did not bear directly on the labor movement" (Solon DeLeon to author, February 8, 1973).

49. DeLeon, "Voice of Madison," p. 19; Daniel DeLeon, "The Trust," in Socialist Labor Party, *The Trusts*, Buzz Saw Series, vol. I, no. 7 (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1902), pp. 56-57.

50. DeLeon, "Nationalism"; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 21-22; DeLeon, *Address*, pp. 13-14; Stone, *Attitude of the Socialists*, p. 9; DeLeon, *Socialist vs. Capitalist Economics*, p. 45.

51. DeLeon, "Karl Marx," p. 26; Thomas C. Brophy, "Editorial Notes," *Socialist Annual for 1894*, pp. 26-27. DeLeon's involvement with "the American wing" of the movement is analyzed more fully in Chapter 5.

52. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 6; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 12, 18; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 8; DeLeon, *Socialist vs. Capitalist Economics*, p. 45.

53. DeLeon, "1912 Platform," pp. 13-15; Daniel DeLeon, "An Open Letter," *Daily People*, September 1, 1911, in DeLeon, *Capitalism Means War!*, p. 14; DeLeon, "Nationalism"; DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," p. 72; DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, pp. 40-41.

54. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 35; DeLeon, "Nationalism"; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 14; DeLeon, "An Open Letter," in *Vatican in Politics*, p. 42.

55. Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 341; "Daniel DeLeon Lectures"; Karl Reeve, "DeLeonism and Communism," *Communist* 7 (June 1928): 364; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 15.

56. Daniel DeLeon, "Translator's Preface," to Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, p. xvii; *People*, May 26, 1895, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 215-216; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 15; *People*, October 13, 1895, in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 181; Arnold Petersen, *Revolutionary Milestones: 1890-1930* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1946), p. 9; David Goldstein, *Autobiography of a Campaigner for Christ* (Boston: Catholic Campaigners for Christ, 1936), p. 12. As indicated by the autobiography's title, Goldstein eventually defected to DeLeon's most despised adversary, the Catholic Church, which he served as an evangelist, striving to counteract socialist propaganda among Catholic workers. For this reason, Goldstein's account may be apocryphal, but in light of DeLeon's own oft-repeated statements on the question, it does have an authentic ring. The further implications and consequences of DeLeon's position on reforms, compromise, and the pursuit of limited objectives in general will be explored below in other contexts.

57. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 35; DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 192; Socialist Labor Party, *Disruption and Disrupters*, p. 38; Daniel DeLeon, "A Mission of the Trades Union," *Daily People*, March 4, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 17; DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 85; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 61; John Spargo, *Memoir*, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, p. 128.

58. Actually, in typical fashion, DeLeon resolved the apparent tension between these two opposing tendencies by theoretically synthesizing them in a more comprehensive, dialectical conception of the diverse problems inherent in the revolutionary process and the means required for surmounting them. This will be treated in due course.

59. DeLeon, "Karl Marx," pp. 27-28, 30.

60. Daniel DeLeon, "Notes on the Stuttgart Congress, I: New Faces," *Daily People*, October 6, 1907. The quotation gives added meaning to DeLeon's retrospective comment, cited in Chapter 3, regarding his entry into the labor movement, to the effect that "a 'cat's-paw' of the Labor Movement" had drawn him "within its whirl" (see DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 3).

61. "Hugh O. Pentecost"; DeLeon, "Universal Modernism," in Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 22; Brophy, "Editorial Notes," p. 27; DeLeon, "Our

Allies the Ultramontanes," p. 72. "Progress" did not always assume pleasing forms, but that did not alter the fact that efforts to forestall it, even in these instances, would be futile. Attempts by reformers, for example, to destroy or inhibit the growth of trusts were compared to "attempts to hold back a runaway horse by the tail." He further warned: "He who undertakes the feat [of trust-smashing] might as well brace himself against the cascade of Niagara" (DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 13).

62. "May Day in New York. Under the Banner of Socialism," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 10, 1890; "Brooklyn Nationalists. They Challenge the Plutocrats to a Public Debate—DeLeon Reviews the Work of the Boodle Parties," *Workmen's Advocate*, October 11, 1890; Brophy, "Editorial Notes," pp. 26-27; "November 11. New York Socialists Honoring the Chicago Martyrs," *Workmen's Advocate*, November 15, 1890; Daniel DeLeon, "Two Shots," *People*, October 15, 1899, in DeLeon, *Capitalism Means War!* p. 28; DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 172-173; DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress, 1893*, p. 4.

63. DeLeon, "Nationalism."

64. DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 15; DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 38; "DEBATE: Between the Boot & Shoe Workers' Union, Affiliated with A.F. of L. Represented by John F. Tobin and Frank A. Sieverman; and the General Council of Shoe Workers, Affiliated with S.T. & L.A. of U.S. & C. Represented by William L. Brower and Daniel DeLeon; at Teutonia Hall, Sixteenth Street and Third Avenue, New York City, N.Y., April 24th, 1898," MSS in the Archives of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, Boston, p. 14; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 29; Daniel DeLeon, *Unity: An Address Delivered at New Pythagoras Hall, New York, February 21, 1908*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1914), pp. 12-13. The discussion will return to the subject of unity at a later point in the study. DeLeon's willingness to accept a present evil because of its expected long-range benefits extended to the question of trusts. He averred that: "The Socialist welcomes every new trust despite the evil that accompanies it. The evil the Socialist knows is transitory, the benefit—increased plentifulness with decreased toil—he knows is permanent and a step nearer to the Socialist Commonwealth" (Daniel DeLeon, "The 'Militia of Christ,'" *Daily People*, January 14, 1911, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, pp. 32-33).

65. DeLeon, " 'Militia of Christ,' " p. 33; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 166; *People*, June 26, 1898, in Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 115-116; Bertha DeLeon, " 'Nineties with DeLeon,'" p. 22. See also p. 18 of the latter.

66. DeLeon, "Americanism", p. 3. DeLeon's feelings about the past were actually somewhat mixed. A distinction was drawn between vestigial elements which retained their viability and those which did not. At one point he stated that determining "the program of the Social Revolution" were "the race's imperative striving to regain the good it temporarily let go in order to escape the bad that burdened it"; its "unerring instinct to save the means, which, being developed in the course of its march to the civilized goal, are either conducive towards, or necessary for, the preservation of the goal it-



self"; and its "common sense which distinguishes between means that are of temporary and those that are of permanent utility; and which, while preserving the latter, causes it to discard the former, when obsolete" (DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 40).

67. Daniel DeLeon, "Elihu Root's Correct Instinct," *Daily People*, March 10, 1911, in Arnold Petersen, *The Supreme Court* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1971), p. 99.

68. DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 22; Daniel DeLeon, "Watson Bows His Adieus," *Daily People*, June 17, 1910, in DeLeon, *Evolution of a Liberal*, p. 71; DeLeon, "America's Universities," p. 73; DeLeon, *Socialist vs. Capitalist Economics*, p. 46; Daniel DeLeon, "And This Is a Professor," *Daily People*, May 3, 1902, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, p. 59; Daniel DeLeon, "Blessful 'Insistence' Harmful 'Objection,'" *Daily People*, February 3, 1910, in DeLeon, *Marxian Science*, p. 76.

69. "Hugh O. Pentecost"; DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, p. 43; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 5-6.

70. *People*, April 5, 1891, in Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 140. He expressed the same sentiment when replying to a "Letter Box" inquiry in 1900, which came, evidently, from a single-taxer: "A truce with your Henry George and his Single-Tax flatulency! The two are extinct, the one as much as the other!" (quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 116).

71. *People*, December 10, 1893, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 109; "First Annual Convention of the S.T. & L.A.," *People*, July 6, 1896 (DeLeon was the keynote speaker); DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 33; DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress, 1893*, p. 6; Daniel DeLeon, "Pure and Simple Weapons," *Weekly People*, September 29, 1900, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 176; Daniel DeLeon, "Feudalist and Bourgeois," *Daily People*, June 16, 1912, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 44; DeLeon, "Socialism Complemented," p. 51; DeLeon, "The 'Index,'" p. 65; Daniel DeLeon, "Galileo," *Daily People*, December 8, 1913, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 61.

72. Even DeLeon's son was unable to provide much detail about the earlier years of his father's life.

73. One illustration of the distrust of lawyers prevalent among workingmen can be found in the constitution of the Knights of Labor, where lawyers as a class, along with bankers, doctors, and saloonkeepers, were barred from membership; see Ware, *Labor Movement*, p. 382. In fact, DeLeon's status as a nonpracticing lawyer even caused him trouble while active in the K. of L.; an attempt was made to expel him from District Assembly 49 on these grounds in 1894 (Quint, *Forging*, p. 155).

74. Stansbury, "'Daily People,'" 89; see, for instance, Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 212-213.

75. "John Swinton. Greeted by Three Thousand Toilers," *Workmen's Advocate*, October 18, 1890. Obviously, DeLeon could have learned of Swinton's presence there long after the fact.

76. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 85. Interestingly, William O. McCagg, Jr., in his study of Jewish revolutionaries of this general period in Hungary ("Jews

in *Revolutions*," 93-95, 100-101) found that they, too, responded to "problems of assimilation" by radically rejecting their Jewish identities in favor of socialism.

77. Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon*, p. 9; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 13; Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 9; also see Stansbury, "'Daily People,'" 89. The truth was not so easily concealed, however. Rumors persisted that DeLeon was really a Jew who denied his extraction (Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 10), the currency of which he himself acknowledged at one point (Rudolph Katz, "With DeLeon since '89," in Socialist Labor Party, *DeLeon Symposium*, II, 135). Hence, DeLeon hedged a bit when he felt pressed. Schlossberg ("Daniel DeLeon," p. 10), himself a Jew, recalled that: "In a talk which we had with regards to this subject, DeLeon told me that no Spaniard can say with absolute certainty that there is no Jewish blood in him, and he did not know whether there were any Jews in his family." Yet, he immediately retreated from that admission, Schlossberg going on to report there that he disclaimed any knowledge of a Jewish writer with the DeLeon surname mentioned by the former as possibly connected to his family and added untruthfully that his given name, "to the best of his knowledge, was the first Biblical name in his family." (See Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, pp. 428, 449-450, for the several Old Testament names in his family.)

78. Solon DeLeon to author, December 9, 1972.

79. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 25-26.

80. Daniel DeLeon, "Tom Watson Climbs Down," *Daily People*, April 25, 1910, in DeLeon, *Evolution of a Liberal*, p. 59; Katz, "With DeLeon since '89," p. 132; Daniel DeLeon, "Our Revolutionary Fathers," in DeLeon, *Americanism*, p. 8; DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 28; DeLeon, "Artemus Ward." The latter article originally appeared in Yiddish, in the Jewish socialist journal, *Die Zukunft!*

81. Daniel DeLeon, "Preface," to John H. Halls, *Woman and Her Emancipation* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1909); DeLeon, *Anti-Semitism*, pp. 14, 20-22. Also see pp. 15-19 of the latter. The vociferous airing of such views earned DeLeon the reputation in some quarters of being an anti-Semite; see Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 10; Spargo Oral History Memoir, p. 129.

82. DeLeon, *Unity*, pp. 6-7. Even had the Zionist ideology beckoned at an earlier stage in his life, prior to his avowal of socialism, it is doubtful that he would have responded. In Chapter 1, I noted that DeLeon's religious commitment declined after his arrival in the United States, and in view of that and his fairly rapid adjustment to the mainstream of American life, it can be concluded that his inclinations were definitely assimilationist. As also stated in the first chapter, barriers of language, culture, religious ritual, and differing experience set DeLeon off from that larger body of Jewry in America in which Zionism would later register its main impact, making it yet more unlikely that the doctrine of Jewish separatism would have held any appeal for him.

83. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, p. 451; Bertha DeLeon, "'Nineties with DeLeon," p. 25. Sarah DeLeon's feeling of betrayal was no doubt heightened by the fact that she had accompanied him everywhere in his early years

and during that time had expended her inheritance for his benefit (Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History*, p. 450). DeLeon paltered about this too, apparently attributing his break with his mother and relatives solely to their disapproval, as high-caste conservatives, of his radicalism (Olive Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," p. 92; Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 9). His version has him being disinherited of a family fortune as the price of his commitment (Schlossberg, *Workers and Their World*, p. 83).

84. Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 152-160. Solon's position in these disagreements was, as far as his father was concerned, tantamount to straying from the socialist path.

85. Solon's real given name was Salomon, DeLeon having observed, at the time of the boy's birth in 1883, the Sephardic tradition of naming the first son after one's father (Dr. I. S. Emmanuel to author, July 17, 1972). The nickname "Solon," however, quickly came to prevail (Oakley Johnson, "Foreword," p. 3), an obvious reflection of the elder DeLeon's classical training and perhaps a cosmetic overlay to conceal the Jewish derivation of the original name. Revealingly, the names given to the children of the second marriage—Florence, Genseric, Gertrude, Paul, and Donald (Oakley Johnson, "Foreword," p. 6)—had no obvious connections with Judaism.

86. Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973. Solon recalled that DeLeon did not even try to inculcate socialist values in them.

## 5. The Party of Socialism

1. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 3, 13-15.

2. Albert Fried, "Daniel DeLeon and the Socialist Labor Party, 1890-1908" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1955), pp. 9, 25; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 114; Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 44; White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 42; Eric Hass, *The Socialist Labor Party and the Internationals* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1949), pp. 41, 55, 70, 81. When on the other side of the Atlantic, moreover, DeLeon did not restrict himself solely to the work of the International, but lectured and attended other political meetings as well; see "A Visit to London," "DeLeon in Edinburgh," "A Week with Daniel DeLeon," in *Socialist* (Edinburgh) 1 (December 1952): 3-5, 7; also see C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (New York: International Publishers, New World Paperbacks, 1971), p. 182, and Don K. McKee, "Daniel DeLeon: A Reappraisal," *Labor History* 1 (Fall 1960): 286-287.

3. Bloor, *We Are Many*, p. 54; Johnson and Reeve, *Bibliography*, pp. 3-5, 7, 9.

4. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 114; Oakley C. Johnson, "Foreword," to Reeve, *Life and Times*, p. 9; Johnson and Reeve, *Bibliography*, p. 3; Olive M. Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," in *Socialist Labor Party, DeLeon Symposium*, I, 95-96; Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel DeLeon," in *Socialist Labor Party, DeLeon Symposium*, I, 29-30; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 328-331; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 64, 145; Stansbury, "'Daily People,'" pp. 89-90; White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 43.

5. Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973; Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 2-3.

6. White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 43; DeLeon, *Unity*, pp. 3-4; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 17; Socialist Labor Party, "Daniel DeLeon: Editor, *Daily and Weekly People*," in Socialist Labor Party, *Party Press*, unpaginated.

7. Schlossberg ("Daniel DeLeon," p. 2), for example, notes that at the time "German was the language used in the party" and that English-speaking comrades were grouped into an "American Section."

8. *Ibid.*; Quint, *Forging*, p. 144.

9. DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 15; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 249; Daniel DeLeon, "Human Nature," *Weekly People*, June 2, 1906, in Louis Lazarus, "Origins of DeLeonist Thought," *DeLeonist* 1 (September-October 1969): 18; Daniel DeLeon, "So Say We All," *Daily People*, January 1, 1914, in DeLeon, *Vatican in Politics*, p. 68; Daniel DeLeon, "Horrible Example of 16 to 1 Mental Training," *Daily People*, November 14, 1909, in DeLeon, *Evolution of a Liberal*, p. 14.

10. For examples, see Eugene Dietzgen, *Attention, Socialists: Leze [sic] Majesty and Treason to the "Fakers" in the Socialist Labor Party Committed by One of the Rank and File* (Chicago: By the Author, 1899), pp. 4, 9; Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, I, 260; Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 158-159; Ronald Sanders, "Abraham Cahan and the Jewish Labor Movement in New York, 1882-1914" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1957), p. 47. Historians, too, have been inclined to hurl the "dictator" epithet: see L. Glen Seretan, "The Personal Style and Political Methods of Daniel DeLeon: A Reconsideration," *Labor History* 14 (Spring 1973): 187.

11. For a discussion of DeLeon's rank and file support, see James A. Stevenson, "Letters to Daniel DeLeon: The Intra-party Constituency for his policy of Strict Party Discipline, 1896-1904," *Labor History* 18 (Summer 1977): 382-396. An instance of DeLeon's strong backing in the ranks was the failure, in 1894, of anti-DeLeonite leader Abraham Cahan's efforts to get a resolution repudiating the Party editor's views and practices passed at a joint meeting of the many socialists working in New York's East Side election districts (Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, I, 259).

12. "Eldest Son of Daniel DeLeon Recalls His Father: An Interview with Solon DeLeon," *Socialist Forum* 9 (Winter 1973-74): 33; Quint, *Forging*, p. 171. Also see p. 172 of the latter, where it is mentioned that the convention also declined to back him against a different set of opponents.

13. The list included: reduction of working hours in proportion to production; establishment of the exclusive right of the federal government to issue money; nationalization of all means of transportation and communications; and conservation of natural resources by act of Congress. The 1892 platform contained twenty such demands, and the 1896 platform, twenty-two. See, for a full listing: Michael A. Plesher, "A Comparison of the Political and Economic Policies, and the Administration of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party of the United States" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1950), pp. 81-82.

14. White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 194-195. The fullest statement of DeLeon's position on the question in his 1896 address, *Reform or Revolution*, cited above. The frustration he must have experienced during the nineties over immediate demands is suggested in his later reference to those years as the "time when we had to go around with our hats in our hands and try to sugar-coat our principles" (quoted in Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 58).

15. Henry Kuhn and Olive M. Johnson, *The Socialist Labor Party during Four Decades: 1890-1930* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1969), pp. 86, 89. This phase of the story will receive scrutiny in Chapter 9. For further evidence belying the claim that DeLeon behaved despotically in Party affairs, see Seretan, "Personal Style," 187-189.

16. DeLeon, *Unity*, p. 3; DeLeon, *Address*, pp. 11-12; Stansbury, " 'Daily People,' " 89.

17. Quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 284, 286-287.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

19. DeLeon, *Address*, p. 11; DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 45. The latter passage, uttered in 1909, incidentally demonstrates the strong aversion DeLeon continued to have for the kind of well-to-do weekend radicals he had found so unendurable in the Bellamy Nationalist clubs.

20. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 22-23. Casting the proletariat as an army, was, of course, entirely consistent with the violent implications of DeLeon's view of the class struggle, examined in the preceding chapter. The military metaphor in reference to the SLP and the proletariat is, in various forms, a common device in DeLeon's writings, testifying to the deep-seated nature of his image of the Party as a necessarily embattled body that had to fortify itself against the designs of its opponents in order to survive.

21. The notion of the SLP as sentries at the barricades was also rendered explicitly. DeLeon once based his opposition to immediate demands on the ground that, by ensconcing them in the Party platform, "we simply notified the freaks and capitalists through what doors they could get into our citadel and knock us out" (quoted in Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 58).

22. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 10; DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 46. The nautical image as well is not infrequently encountered in DeLeon's discourses on the movement. See, for example, his *Two Pages*, p. 84, where he pointed out that the revolutionary force required correct information "for ballast as for sails."

23. DeLeon, *Address*, p. 11; Socialist Labor Party, *Disruption and Disrupters*, p. 23. Writing of the 1904 meeting of the Socialist International in Amsterdam, DeLeon reported an instance which confirmed him in this assessment of the state of Party unity vis-a-vis the outside world. Apparently a Socialist Party man attempted there to take advantage of DeLeon's temporary absence from the convention floor to secure the support of one of the latter's fellow SLP delegates for a resolution which ran counter to SLP doctrine. DeLeon exulted: "Of course he failed egregiously, and found out that the S.L.P. consists not of one man but of a solid body of Socialists" (DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 117).

24. DeLeon to Olive M. Johnson, August 1, 1909, quoted in Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," p. 115.

25. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 22; Daniel DeLeon, "Three S.P. Figures," *Daily People*, December 20, 1910, in Arnold Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism: Its Rise and Collapse in America* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1963), pp. 188-189.

26. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 16-17. DeLeon's concern that the movement be firmly united on principle and that it have the right to demand such unity was a reaction, no doubt, to the debilitating heterogeneity and ideological amorphousness he had earlier observed in the United Labor Party and Nationalist movements. Hence his contention: "Error is manifold; it scatters. Truth only is one-fold, it alone unites" (DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 43).

27. *People*, July 19, 1896, quoted in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 60. This provides an expression, in the context of the Party, of the general anti-individualist strain in DeLeon's thinking, which was surveyed and analyzed in Chapter 4.

28. Plesher, "Comparison," pp. 95-96; *Socialist Forum* interview, p. 33.

29. Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 180-181; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 17-18, 25. Also see White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 216.

30. For a concise summary of the details concerning the SLP's press imbroglio during the decade, see Quint, *Forging*, pp. 168-173, 333-338.

31. DeLeon, *Unity*, p. 16. He was here making an invidious comparison with the condition of the Socialist Party press, which was not directly controlled—from DeLeon's point of view a clear symptom of weakness and insufficiently developed class consciousness.

32. Daniel DeLeon, "The Party Press," *Daily People*, September 20, 1903, in Daniel DeLeon, *Party Ownership of the Press: Historic Documents Relating to the Principles Involved* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1931), p. 29; Solon DeLeon, *Socialist Forum* interview, pp. 34-35.

33. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 50; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 17.

34. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 8, 17-18.

35. For useful accounts of DeLeon's work as the chief disciplinarian of the SLP, see: Quint, *Forging*, pp. 167-173, 332-338; Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), pp. 147-183, *passim*.

36. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 71; Socialist Labor Party, *Disruption and Disrupters*, p. 27. The concern expressed here over the possible laxity of local sections in safeguarding the movement from the disruptive potential of "freaks" was probably the motive behind the DeLeon-inspired resolution of the SLP's 1893 national convention recommending that all sections affiliated with state organizations be directly connected as well with national headquarters in New York (White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 72-73).

37. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 24-25. Actually, as White ("Socialist Labor Party," p. 287) points out, formal expulsion was a less common method for dealing with apostasy than that of simply harrying the offender

from the ranks.

38. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 24. Also see p. 25. That DeLeon would project onto the working class generally his own desire for a tight, protective community held together by ideological purity and strict discipline suggests further his sense of the proletarians as fellow wanderers also in search of a satisfying social context.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 16; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 10. The former address, inasmuch as it was DeLeon's most extended discussion of the subject, testifies to the fact that his theory of the revolutionary movement was worked out in direct reaction to his personal experience with reform. Throughout, as the title indicates, "reform" and "revolution" are treated as paired opposites, the one definable in terms of the other.

40. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 16, 18. DeLeon was oblivious here to the disintegrative potential, conversely, of tight discipline on a movement, the realization of which sorely afflicted the Socialist Labor Party in the years following this utterance, creating a problem, as will be seen, that he had ultimately to confront as a theoretician.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11, 18-19; Daniel DeLeon, "Hard on Milwaukee," *Daily People*, June 27, 1910, in DeLeon, *Evolution of a Liberal*, p. 68. Certainly, DeLeon was counting Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and their followers among the miscreants.

42. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 72-73; DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, pp. 48, 38; Daniel DeLeon, "Demands 'Immediate' and 'Constant,'" *Daily People*, August 2, 1913, in Arnold Petersen, *From Reform to Bayonets* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1964), p. 29; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 20; Goldstein and Avery, *Socialism*, p. 58. These last remarks were made at the 1900 national convention of the Party, which expunged immediate demands from the platform.

44. DeLeon, "Demands 'Immediate' and 'Constant,'" p. 29; Daniel DeLeon, "Debs on the Program of Socialism," *Daily People*, September 9, 1912, in Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism*, p. 184; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 126.

45. Bertha C. DeLeon, "The 'Nineties with DeLeon," in Socialist Labor Party, *Fifty Years*, p. 24; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 15. DeLeon stated here that "the fate of Wat Tyler is ever the fate of reform. The rebels, in this instance, were weak enough to allow themselves to be wheedled into placing their movement into the hands of Richard II, who promised 'relief'—and brought it by marching the men to the gallows."

46. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 70-71; DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 15; DeLeon, "Notes on Stuttgart Congress, IV"; Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 189.

47. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 20, 22.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 13; Daniel DeLeon, "Getting Something Now," *Daily People*, September 6, 1910, in Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism*, pp. 177-178; DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 81. DeLeon actually distinguished (*Two Pages*, p. 80) between "palliatives" and "sops," the former ostensibly redressing real injustice by "installment," while the latter, even less tenable, were merely " 'bon-bon[s]' . . . thrown out to soothe." The distinction, however, became murky as he pro-

ceeded to place municipal ownership in the "sop" category (pp. 81-82).

49. The choice of this example, in all likelihood, was not a random one. It should be kept in mind that DeLeon, in his reformer days, as reported in Chapter 3, had himself been an enthusiastic partisan of municipal ownership, a Nationalist club staple.

50. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 83.

51. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 11, 15. DeLeon apparently changed his mind on this last point. Writing in 1910, fourteen years later, and perhaps in response to the waxing of Progressivism, he was willing to concede that "coalitions may serve movements aiming to reform a social system that is in existence, and the perpetuation of which is the object of reform." Nevertheless, he persisted in the view that "a revolutionary movement cannot be 'all things to all men,' " and "to a revolutionary movement coalitions are either checks to the march, or, if they do not check it from the start, they in the end obstruct it and throw it back demoralized" (DeLeon, "Three S.P. Figures," p. 187).

52. Daniel DeLeon, "Editorial Comment," *Daily People*, January 7, 1900, in Karl Marx, *The Gotha Program*, trans. Daniel DeLeon (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1963), p. 5; Daniel DeLeon, "Did Marx Err?" *Daily People*, July 9, 1911, in Marx, *Gotha Program*, pp. 63-64. In the latter editorial (p. 64), he invoked the authority of Marx to confirm the validity of his position, harking back to an occasion when the father of scientific socialism had "discountenanced the unity, upon a platform of 'skin deep Socialism,' of a party of pure Marxists with one that exhaled bourgeois sentimentality."

53. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 80.

54. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 24; Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 47-48; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 195-196; Plesher, "Comparison," p. 95.

55. Benjamin Stolberg, *Tailor's Progress: The Story of a Famous Union and the Men Who Made It* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1944), p. 31; Daniel DeLeon, "The Chicago Convention," *Daily People*, June 27, 1905, in DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 64.

56. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 21; Daniel DeLeon, "A Mission of the Trades Union," *Daily People*, March 4, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 17; Sanftleben, *Appreciations*, p. 12; Daniel DeLeon, "Caricatures," *People*, May 1, 1898, in DeLeon, *Capitalism Means War!* p. 12; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 26.

57. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 36, 31-32; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 26; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 7. Interestingly, even as he was condemning reform, the mix of moral indignation and scientific detachment in DeLeon's appraisal of conservative labor leaders betrayed a lingering sediment of polite reform beneath the graft of Marxism: in the repeated damning of corruption, there were overtones of the standard mugwump battle cry, while the harping on selfish motives recalled the fixed ethical focus of the Belamyite.

58. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 32; Daniel DeLeon, "Two Flies with One



Clap," *Daily People*, January 25, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 13-14.

59. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 60; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* p. 29; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 21; Daniel DeLeon, *Report of the Socialist Labor Party of the United States of America to the International Congress Held in Stuttgart, August 18-25, 1907* (New York: Socialist Labor Party, 1907), p. 13.

60. DeLeon, "Three S.P. Figures," p. 188; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 20; Daniel DeLeon, "Industrialism," *Daily People*, March 23, 1910, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 57; DeLeon, "Mission of the Trades Union," pp. 17-18; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 35; DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 59; DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, p. 12; DeLeon, "Caricatures," p. 12.

61. DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, p. 12; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 7; Sanftleben, *Appreciations*, p. 12.

62. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 33-34; Sanftleben, *Appreciations*, pp. 12-13; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 21. The SLP constitution of 1904 accordingly prohibited members from joining pure-and-simple unions, except in cases where belonging to a union was a prerequisite for pursuing one's trade, and then the Party member in question was duty-bound to proselytize among his fellow workers within the union (Plesher, "Comparison," p. 96). The alternatives DeLeon posed to "Gompers unionism" will be taken up in Chapters 7 and 8.

63. Chester McArthur Destler, *American Radicalism: 1865-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1966), pp. 17-19, 24-28, 162-221; Alexander Saxton, "San Francisco Labor and the Populist and Progressive Insurgencies," *Pacific Historical Review* 34 (November 1965): 421-438. Labor in DeLeon's home base of New York, however, for the most part resisted the Populist tide; see Eli Goldschmidt, "Labor and Populism: New York City, 1891-1896," *Labor History* 13 (Fall 1972): 520-532.

64. Destler, *Radicalism*, p. 213; Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 118; Quint, *Forging*, p. 217.

65. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 117-118; Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 23, 43; Destler, *Radicalism*, pp. 14, 224; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 101, 211, 217-222, 224-227. As Quint (*Forging*, p. 217) reports, by the middle of 1892 DeLeon found himself locked in debate over the People's Party program with his former Nationalist colleague Thaddeus B. Wakeman, now also a New York Populist leader. He took the opportunity to berate the Nationalists for backing that party and for imagining that there was any connection between Populist agitation and achieving the cooperative commonwealth (Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 33).

66. Daniel DeLeon, "DeLeon's Speech in Reply to Bryan and Cockran [sic]: Gold and Silver Bugs under the Heavy Foot of Socialism," [Yearbook], Fourteenth Annual Convention of the New York Protective Associations (New York: New York Protective Associations, 1896), unpaginated.

67. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 26; *People*, December 17, 1893, in

Norman Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought* (New York: W. W. Norton, The Norton Library, 1966), p. 88; *People*, November 27, 1898, in Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 130.

68. DeLeon, "Horrible Example," p. 21; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 12-13.

69. DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 27; DeLeon, "Reply to Bryan and Cockran [sic]"; *People*, February 12, 1893, in Goldschmidt, "Labor and Populism," 523; Quint, *Forging*, p. 217; *People*, November 18, 1894, in Destler, *Radicalism*, p. 228.

70. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 80.

71. Details of the birth pangs of the Socialist Party can be found in Quint, *Forging*, pp. 319-388.

72. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 220; Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, I, 250. The heavy involvement in the SP of men such as Hillquit, former SLP members with whom DeLeon had already clashed over palliatives, party discipline, the press, the AFL, etc., only served to sharpen the edge of his loathing for the new party.

73. These were subsequently collected in a pamphlet under DeLeon's name and entitled *Berger's Hits and Misses*. The title was later changed to *A Socialist in Congress: His Conduct and Responsibilities, "Parliamentary Idiocy" vs. Marxian Socialism* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1963).

74. Daniel DeLeon, "Berger's Miss No. 9: Who Are the Savings Banks' Depositors?" *Daily People*, June 28, 1911, in DeLeon, *Socialist in Congress*, p. 37; Daniel DeLeon, "Berger's Miss No. 18: Old Age Pension," *Daily People*, August 6, 1911, in DeLeon, *Socialist in Congress*, p. 64; Daniel DeLeon, "Berger's Miss No. 29: The Sire of the Trust," *Daily People*, September 26, 1911, in DeLeon, *Socialist in Congress*, p. 99; Daniel DeLeon, "Stealings of Thunder," *Daily People*, August 13, 1912, in Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism*, p. 178.

75. DeLeon, *Address*, pp. 12, 10; DeLeon, "Hard on Milwaukee," pp. 68-69; Daniel DeLeon, "'Socialism' in Milwaukee," *Daily People*, January 25, 1911, in Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism*, p. 182; DeLeon, "Stealings of Thunder," pp. 180, 179; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 19.

76. DeLeon, "Mission of the Trades Union," p. 19; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 42; DeLeon, "Three S.P. Figures," p. 185. A particularly noxious example of "autonomy" cited by DeLeon was the condoning by the SP of racial segregation in its Southern branches. He asked pointedly: "Why should a truly Socialist organization of whites not take in Negro members, but organize these in separate bodies? Then the body is not truly Socialist. A Socialist body that will trim its sails to 'outside prejudices' had better quit. A truly Socialist body is nothing if not a sort of 'Rough on Prejudices.' To let up on one 'outside prejudice' is to take the plug from under all efforts directed against other prejudices. Ten to one, however, where the issue arises in such a body, it is catering, not to outside, but to inside prejudices, to the prejudices of the members themselves. And then the case is even worse. Such a body should begin by disbanding. It lacks fiber" (*Daily People*, October 25, 1903, quoted in Reeve, *Life and Times*, pp. 135-136).

77. DeLeon, "Getting Something Now," p. 178; DeLeon, "Three S.P. Fig-

ures," p. 185. Apparently, DeLeon presumed that the dry rot infesting the structure of the SP would not disappear with the demise of that party but would instead continue to be carried by its individual members. Writing to Olive M. Johnson in 1909, he vented the inimical sentiment that: "As an 'element' I consider the S.P. folks worthless. If they were to come into the S.L.P. in any numbers I should want to have them strip to the skin; I would burn their clothes to kill the microbes; then the stripped S.P. [member] I would put through a Turkish bath, and then through a Russian bath, and then I would hang him by the heels for a spell and let the fresh air blow through him. Such a rotten element as they are!" (DeLeon to Johnson, November 25, 1909, quoted in Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," p. 116).

## 6. Toward a Broader-Based Party

1. Seretan, "Personal Style," 166-167; *People*, July 19, 1896, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 60. Chapters 7 and 8 will demonstrate that these questions framed DeLeon's thinking, especially on unions and their relationship to the revolutionary process, and that his departure from the rigidity and orthodoxy normally attributed to him was most marked in this area.

2. "May Day in New York. Under the Banner of Socialism," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 10, 1890; Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, I, 214-215; Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 36, 61, 187-190.

3. Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, I, 248; Daniel DeLeon, "Berger's Hit No. 1: Jeffersonianism," *Daily People*, May 14, 1911, in DeLeon, *Socialist in Congress*, pp. 7-9; DeLeon, "Demands 'Immediate' and 'Constant,'" pp. 28-29.

4. *Socialist Forum* interview, pp. 8-11.

5. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 43. DeLeon, as Luntz notes, changed his mind shortly after the Cincinnati Conference of May 1891, issued the movement's first national manifesto. The high visibility of Nationalists themselves at the Cincinnati meeting (Destler, *Radicalism*, p. 14), however, probably contributed significantly to DeLeon's turnaround.

6. Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 34, 36; *People*, December 17, 1893, in Pollack, *Populist Response*, pp. 88-89; *People*, December 9, 1894, March 3, 1895, in Quint, *Forging*, p. 217; Daniel M. Feins, "Labor's Role in the Populist Movement, 1890-1896" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1939), pp. 85-86.

7. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 168, 107-109, 118.

8. *People*, June 24, 1894, November 4, 1894, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 238-239; see also pp. 236-237 of the latter; Robert William Iversen, "Morris Hillquit: American Social Democrat, A Study of the American Left from Haymarket to the New Deal" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1951), pp. 19-20.

9. White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 239-241, 244; *People*, June 27, 1897, July 11, 1897, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 242-244; Iversen, "Morris Hillquit," p. 20; Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912* (New York: Monthly Review Press, Modern Reader Paperback Edition, 1972), p. 54.

10. For an insightful comparison of Debs and DeLeon in this connection,

see Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 182-185. DeLeon's position in several areas had been undergoing modification after the turn of the century; for a discussion of this and his subsequent involvement with the IWW, see Chapter 8.

11. Seretan, "Personal Style," 192-193, 196-197. See also Bloor, *We are Many*, p. 59; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 110-111; and William E. Trautmann, "The History of the Industrial Union Manifesto," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, August 22, 1908.

12. *Industrial Union Bulletin*, April 6, 1907; O. W. Sewell and Louis C. Haller, "In California," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, April 13, 1907; Sanftleben, *Appreciations*, p. 16; "Simons Getting His," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, October 19, 1907.

13. Sanftleben, *Appreciations*, p. 15; DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International*, 1907, pp. 14-18; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 113, 110.

14. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 161; David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1967), pp. 4-5.

15. DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International*, 1907, pp. 14-15; Rudolph Katz, "With DeLeon since '89," in Socialist Labor Party, *DeLeon Symposium*, II, 89; Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel DeLeon," p. 30; Kipnis, *Socialist Movement*, p. 29.

16. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 162-165. When DeLeon had earlier addressed the problem the American environment presented to the progress of socialism, he had, in a much cruder and more superficial analysis, seen it as quite short-range in nature, in no way a damper to his hopeful prognosis for the immediate future. "American capitalism," he wrote in 1893, had "not yet succeeded in wholly wrecking a country that is wonderfully favored by its geographic position, its historic development, and its boundless natural resources." And because the United States was "not yet . . . economically exhausted" and because it was comparatively sparsely populated, the "opportunity for the [satisfactory] occupation of superfluous labor" still existed, thereby rendering "economic pressure" on the system "milder." This, he suggested, was a peculiarity that would only delay briefly the collapse of class rule in America (DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress*, 1893, p. 2).

17. A most notable example is Selig Perlman; see his seminal *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1970), pp. 168-169.

18. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 165. As with his earlier explanation of the effect of American material conditions, DeLeon's previous estimate of the negative impact of immigration was less acute and intrinsically more optimistic. Immigrants were "alienated . . . from Socialist thought" because America offered them higher wages and better working conditions than they had known in their homelands. Since American capitalism, however, would soon be entering its stage of decomposition, the position of the immigrants would decline relative to that which they had enjoyed in the country initially, and their disillusionment would, presumably, grow apace (DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress*, 1893, p. 2).

19. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 166.

20. Ibid., pp. 170, 55, 192-193.

21. Ibid., pp. 119-120, 57, 63, 58, 60-63.

22. Ibid., p. 60. On pp. 59-60, leading up to the quotation, there is a long recitation of DeLeon's complaints about SP policy, leaving no doubt as to who the "deepest-dyed villain" is in the plot.

23. James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1969), p. 2.

24. Seretan, "Personal Style," pp. 192-201. During late 1906 and early 1907, when ill-feeling over the issue had not yet risen to the heights it would later, DeLeon gave over a considerable amount of space in his paper to an exchange between himself and spokesmen of the IWW antipolitical wing, in an effort to clear up the matter before it tore the union apart. (The exchange was later put out as a pamphlet under the title *As to Politics*, cited fully above.) However, it was obvious afterward that an airing of the differences had changed few minds.

25. A prime example was Debs, who, as late as 1914, years after the anarcho-syndicalist-DeLeonite schism had occurred, appealed for a reunited IWW essentially on the lines of the organization's original program, which had expressly recognized the need for a political reflex. See Eugene V. Debs, "A Plea for Solidarity," *International Socialist Review*, March 1914, in Eugene V. Debs, *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, ed. Jean Y. Tussey (New York: Pathfinder Press, Merit Books, 1970), pp. 210-211. The occasion for a fresh evaluation of the unity matter was provided by the passing of another unity resolution at the Stuttgart International Congress in 1907; see Hass, *S.L.P. and Internationals*, p. 80.

26. DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, p. 20; Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 213.

27. Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel DeLeon," pp. 65-66.

28. See, for examples and an analysis, Seretan, "Personal Style," 187-201.

29. For an examination of this myth, see Seretan, "Personal Style," 166-177. In *Unity* (p. 7), DeLeon asserted that "a man of sense . . . and disciplined thought . . . does not adjust facts to a theory; he adjusts his theory to the facts. Seeing the facts do not square with his theory, he lays his theory by, marshals the facts, and re-casts his theory in accordance with them."

30. DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 61-62; DeLeon, *Unity*, pp. 5, 9-10.

31. DeLeon, *Unity*, pp. 11-13.

32. Ibid., pp. 14-16.

33. Ibid., p. 17.

34. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

35. Ibid., p. 24. Socialist Party publicist Jessie Wallace Hughan, in her tract, *American Socialism of the Present Day* (New York: John Lane, 1911), p. 47, cited "long-standing distrust" as the reason the unity initiative was spurned. DeLeon's friend Joseph Schlossberg, discussing the move "many years later" with Victor Berger, learned that "the Socialist party leaders were afraid of . . . [DeLeon,] . . . afraid that . . . [he] would capture and break the Socialist party if he were allowed to come in." About DeLeon's pure inten-

tions, however, Schlossberg was emphatic: "DeLeon made every possible effort to reunite the socialist movement. He would have given his life to bring it about . . . DeLeon of the unity period was not the DeLeon of 1899 . . . The older DeLeon knew better. He was sincere in working for socialist unity. I know whereof I speak. I have always believed that his failure hastened his death" (Schlossberg, *Workers and Their World*, p. 192). Evidently Schlossberg was persuasive on the point, for he reported that Berger "was deeply interested in what I told him" (Schlossberg, *Workers and Their World*, p. 192) and expressed regret "that he had not known it in time" (Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 15).

36. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 165-166; DeLeon, *Address*, p. 12.

37. DeLeon to Olive M. Johnson, November 25, 1909, August 1, 1909, quoted in Johnson, "Daniel DeLeon—Our Comrade," pp. 116, 115.

38. Hass, *S.L.P. and Internationals*, pp. 81-82; DeLeon, *Unity*, p. 25. This information was contained in an editor's parenthetical comment in the second edition of the latter pamphlet, published in 1914, which has been cited throughout. The fact that the Party would reissue the address as late as the year of DeLeon's death indicates that unity, even at this date, was still very much on its collective mind.

39. The Amsterdam text is reproduced in DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 160-161.

40. Hass, *S.L.P. and Internationals*, pp. 66-75, 82; Hughan, *American Socialism*, p. 209.

## 7. The New Trade Unionism

1. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 21, 23, 36, 39; Daniel DeLeon, "Two Flies with One Clap," *Daily People*, January 25, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 14. See also DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 10.

2. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 116; Quint, *Forging*, p. 146; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 83.

3. Ware, *Labor Movement*.

4. Kuhn and Johnson, *Four Decades*, p. 18; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 107-108; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 61-64, 153-155, 158; Martin A. Cohen, "Jewish Immigrants and American Trade Unions" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1941), p. 87; Fine, *Parties*, pp. 153-154, 156; Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 48; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 181; Abraham Meyer Rogoff, "Formative Years of the Jewish Labor Movement in the United States (1890-1900)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1945), p. 53.

5. Details on DeLeon's experiences at the national level in the K. of L. can be found in Fine, *Parties*, pp. 154-157, and Quint, *Forging*, pp. 154-160.

6. DeLeon, *Report to International Socialist Congress, 1893*, p. 4. Emphasis added.

7. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 48-49. The new relationship with the Order itself caught a number of Party members by surprise when publicized, since the Party had not previously been sympathetic to the Knights (White,

"Socialist Labor Party," p. 110). Evidently, boring from within the Knights was never fully accepted in the SLP, since some of DeLeon's critics quickly seized upon his eventual failure and used it against him in Party infighting (Quint, *Forging*, p. 172; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 128-129).

8. *People*, December 10, 1893, quoted in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 109.

9. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 49-50.

10. White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 111-112. DeLeon was cognizant of the fact that Sovereign was all the while "making speeches for populism" (Daniel DeLeon, "Report of Daniel DeLeon, One of the Seven Representatives of D.A. 49 at the Washington G.A., to the Members of the K. of L.," [Year-book], Fourteenth Annual Convention of the New York Protective Associations [New York: New York Protective Associations, 1896], unpaginated). In cultivating his relationship with the Grand Master Workman, DeLeon even went so far as to praise Ernest Kurzenknabe, an SLP expellee but a Sovereign man, when it became known that Kurzenknabe had been elected as a delegate to the 1894 General Assembly (White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 119). After Kurzenknabe subsequently became involved in the Sovereignite move to keep DeLeon's delegation out of the 1895 General Assembly, DeLeon expressed his real feelings about the man, calling him "a cross between an Anarchist and a 'Pure and Simpler' of the basest sort" (DeLeon, "Report to K. of L.").

11. DeLeon, "Report to K. of L.," *People*, December 2, 1894, in White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 113-114. The broad discrepancy between practice and preachment in DeLeon's deportment during his Knights of Labor period is also treated in Seretan, "Personal Style," pp. 168-171, 189-190.

12. Quint, *Forging*, pp. 157-159; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 114, 122, 126; DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 20.

13. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 10-11; DeLeon, "Report to K. of L.," Quint, *Forging*, pp. 160-162, 164. Although the Alliance was obviously DeLeon's brainchild, he characteristically depersonalized the causes of its emergence, preferring to look upon it instead as the collectively sired progeny of the class-conscious proletariat. The STLA, he announced at its first convention, "is not the work of any one man or set of men, it is the product of the condition in which the Labor Movement in America finds itself and of the experience of the workers" (quoted in "First Annual Convention of the S.T. & L.A.," *People*, July 6, 1896). And writing nearly a decade after the Alliance's founding, when the organization was nearly moribund, he maintained that the "demand for the organization of that body" came "from the ranks of fully 15,000 workingmen" (Daniel DeLeon, "The 'Intellectual,'" *Daily People*, March 19, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 24).

14. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 36; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* pp. 30-31; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 13-14. Compare this last quotation with DeLeon's definition of the party's vanguard assault-force function in *Reform or Revolution* (pp. 22-23), quoted in Chapter 5.

15. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 127, 132, 146; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 165-166, 171-172, 333. The criticisms of DeLeon on this issue were subsequently taken

up by historians; for a sampling, see Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 70-71.

16. Herreshoff, *Disciples*, pp. 123, 127-128; Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," pp. 71-73; Quint, *Forging*, p. 168; Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 8. Also see Schlossberg, *Workers and Their World*, p. 176.

17. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 33-34. At one point, DeLeon seemed reluctant to dispense even with the incorrigible unions, holding out some hope that outside pressure might reform them "and bring them over" (DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 13). DeLeon had probably not meant to imply originally that "boring from within" was totally without merit in any form and should be foresworn in all cases, but the sting of defeat in the K. of L. and the polemical atmosphere surrounding the trade-union question thereafter prompted him to express himself in absolutes. He later made the qualification that the unions could not "be bored from within *exclusively*" (DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 13; emphasis added).

18. *People*, August 14, 1898, quoted in Herreshoff, *Disciples*, p. 126. Herreshoff goes on to demonstrate (pp. 126-127) that DeLeon's interpretation of the Alliance's mission concerning pure-and-simple unions was really not as rigid as those of other Party members.

19. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 33; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 13.

20. Though DeLeon's pre-IWW trade-union theory was closer in concept to that of the Knights than to his mature theory, there was, as will be seen, a considerable degree of continuity between his earlier thought and Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, highlighting once again his ability to assimilate and extend older ideas into intellectual constructs devised in response to changed circumstances.

21. Stone, *Attitude of the Socialists*, pp. 10-11; Quint, *Forging*, p. 167; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 136, 141, 155, 159, 163, 167, 172, 179-180; John J. Murphy, "The Workers' International Industrial Union" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1921), p. 4. Herreshoff (*Disciples*, p. 121), Kovalcheck ("Daniel DeLeon," p. 153), and Quint (*Forging*, pp. 151-153) all err in this regard, apparently viewing DeLeon's New Trade Unionism through the distorting lens of the industrial unionism he later adopted as an activist in the IWW. In point of fact there is no mention at all of the industrial organizational mode in any of DeLeon's expositions of the New Trade Unionism. Although his study presents abundant evidence to the contrary, White ("Socialist Labor Party," p. 140) makes the same mistake, which he compounds by asserting that the Knights, too, had an industrial structure. (Ware [*Labor Movement*, pp. 156-158] convincingly demonstrates that the Knights' trade bodies were defined by craft.) DeLeon himself is perhaps partially to blame for the confusion. Speaking for the IWW in 1907, he freely admitted that while the STLA had "had the soul," it "lacked the correct structure" (quoted in "Daniel DeLeon Lectures," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, March 9, 1907). Nevertheless, he was not anxious to publicize that he and the Alliance had not been "right" all along, and he was not averse to allowing the spurious but more favorable impression to stand when the matter came up. Hence, two months after the ini-



tial conference that would lead to the founding of the IWW, he could quote, without correction, the report of the SLP representative at the conference, Frank Bohn, who declared that the meeting endorsed "class-conscious, Industrial Unionism as advocated by the S.T. and L.A" (quoted in DeLeon, "The Intellectual," p. 25).

22. White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 142. This particular affiliate underscores how little of the "One Big Union" spirit really existed in the STLA. That it could become a part of the Alliance at all shows that the New Trade Unionist federation had no qualms about dividing workers on ethnic as well as craft lines. (This practice also extended to the mixed alliances, White [p. 141] reporting, for instance, the admission of a mixed unit in 1898 whose membership was limited to those of Bohemian extraction.) Permitting boundaries between affiliated bodies to be drawn in this way led inevitably to petty jurisdictional disputes exactly of the kind chronically plaguing the class-unconscious AFL, as was illustrated in 1897 when the German Waiters balked at accepting a transfer card from another STLA union, the Waiters' Alliance Liberty.

23. Ibid., p. 159. The assigned sphere of this union's activity, it appears, had actually been reduced during its tenure in the Alliance, since it was originally called the "All Tobacco Cigarettemakers' Union."

24. Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 51. According to Luntz, the criticisms leveled at the AFL by the Alliance at this time rarely referred to the AFL's lack of interest in the unskilled.

25. DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 25; DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 6-7.

26. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 13. 43; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 25; DeLeon et al., "Boot and Shoe Workers Debate," pp. 13-14, 32; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 33; DeLeon and Connolly, "Wages, Marriage and the Church" (DeLeon repeated these sentiments on the limitations inherent equally in all unions in *Burning Question*, pp. 24, 26); DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 34-35.

27. Kovalcheck, "Daniel DeLeon," p. 30; Quint, *Forging*, p. 151; White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 176; DeLeon et al., "Boot and Shoe Workers Debate," p. 32.

28. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 9-10; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, pp. 4-5.

29. White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 151-152, 155, 159, 176-178. N. I. Stone, a strong movement critic of DeLeon's dual unionism and an AFL loyalist, was forced to admit that the Alliance had what were, even from his "pure-and-simple" perspective, "bona fide" unions which enrolled previously unorganized workers and undertook functions common to all trade unions (Stone, *Attitude of the Socialists*, p. 12).

30. Howard Martin Gitelman, "Attempts to Unify the American Labor Movement, 1865-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1960), p. 509; Stone, *Attitude of the Socialists*, p. 15 (For a further discussion of DeLeon's inconsistency on strikes and the Alliance, see Seretan, "Personal Style," 175-176); DeLeon and Connolly, "Wages, Marriage and the Church"; DeLeon

et al., "Boot and Shoe Workers Debate," pp. 16, 32. White ("Socialist Labor Party," p. 155) reports, for instance, that STLA general executive board members, particularly William Brower and Ernst Bohm, were instrumental in negotiating a favorable agreement in 1898 with Seidenberg, Stiefel and Company, a tobacco firm whose New York plant had been struck by the Alliance-affiliated All Tobacco Cigarettemakers' Union. As was illustrated above, DeLeon would heap obloquy on the practice a few years later.

31. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 23-24, 36.

32. DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, pp. 30, 24; DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 45-46.

33. DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 53, 46.

34. DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 29.

35. The theory of the New Trade Unionism, structurally speaking, had some kinship with DeLeon's mature theory of the party as set out in his *Unity* address. In both instances, the advanced revolutionary element constituted the high ground, the "Mountain," from which a commanding view of the future could be had; it would point the way for the less developed segment of the movement, the "Vale" that necessarily mirrored the imperfect, incomplete quality of the present to which its viewpoint was confined. As will be shown, however, the trade-union "Vale" soon evinced as little interest in coexisting with the Socialist Labor Party "Mountain" as its later Socialist Party counterpart would.

36. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 10, 8.

37. DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 24-25; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 151, 168; DeLeon et al., "Boot and Shoe Workers Debate," pp. 13, 15-16; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 22.

38. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 39-40; DeLeon et al., "Boot and Shoe Workers Debate," pp. 13-14; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 24-25, 32; Quint, *Forging*, pp. 164-165; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 144-145. Accrediting Party sections as full-fledged constituents of the Alliance was no doubt a reaction to the AFL's refusal to allow nontrade organizations, specifically a socialist delegation, to be seated at its 1890 convention. The narrow, pure-and-simple definition of what constituted a legitimate part of the labor movement was precisely what the Alliance was organized to combat and overthrow.

39. DeLeon, "Ineffectual Weapons," in White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 176; White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 178; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?*, p. 31.

40. The comments to be quoted concerning the enlistment of all workers in the union, whether employed or unemployed, are taken from DeLeon's 1904 speech, *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*. While it is true that in this address he anticipated his later IWW theory by giving the union an important, independent role at the moment of revolutionary crisis and after, one for which mass recruitment was essential, it is also true that at this point he still imagined that in the period leading up to the revolutionary cataclysm the union's contribution would, as before, be confined to building support for the

political movement. The context in which the quoted remarks were uttered indicates that they were meant to apply to the latter function.

41. DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 24-26. DeLeon did refer somewhat nebulously here (p. 25) to the incidental economic advantages he believed would obtain from an open union admission policy. Such would reflect a willingness, he said, "to adapt" to "the adult conditions of capitalism" and somehow cause the union in question to "do better."

42. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 9; DeLeon and Connolly, "Wages, Marriage and the Church." DeLeon claimed a year later, when addressing the founding convention of the IWW, that the "Alliance stated what it was there for, and stated it frankly." The principle upon which it operated, he offered, was "that you could not first take the men into the union under the false pretense that you were going to raise their wages, and afterwards indoctrinate them. No, you had to indoctrinate them first, and then bring them in" (Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings* [New York: Merit Publishers, 1969], p. 151). The evidence adduced in the foregoing analysis renders this depiction of the STLA's methods a transparent canard. In light of the evidence, the specifics of the denial only serve to confirm its falsity.

43. Quint, *Forging*, p. 165; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 151, 169. *The People* was designated at the outset as the Alliance's official organ, and DeLeon was from its inception a member of the movement's general executive board (White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 136). The main outbreaks of discord in this period involved, first, the refusal of thirteen local assemblies of D.A. 49 to adhere to the district's withdrawal from the K. of L. and its decision to take part in the new socialist organization, ending in their expulsion (White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 134); and, second, the support given by elements of the United Hebrew Trades in the Alliance to Party dissidents, causing the removal of the offending trade locals by the STLA's 1897 convention (Gitelman, "Attempts," p. 496).

44. Bohm's sin was his connection with the publication of a union souvenir that carried political advertisements placed by the capitalist parties. Bohm attributed the responsibility to a partner but apparently refused to comply with DeLeon's demands that he separate himself from the partner on that account (DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 29-30; Gitelman, "Attempts," p. 498). Morgan's problems were precipitated by reports that he was hostile to the Party leadership and that he was misrepresenting socialist doctrine. The action of the Alliance convention relieved him momentarily from the pain of censure, but he was subsequently expelled from both the Alliance and the SLP (Gitelman, "Attempts," p. 498).

45. Gitelman, "Attempts," pp. 498, 500-501; Quint, *Forging*, p. 167; White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 152, 163, 165-167, 169.

46. White, "Socialist Labor Party," pp. 179-180. The interlocking character of the economic and political wings of the movement was further betokened when the Party's 1900 national convention resolved to deny Party membership to any union organizer who did not work for the Alliance (Quint, *Forging*,

ing, p. 371). Ella Reeve Bloor, at the time an Alliance activist, later recalled noting a "bureaucratic attitude creeping into the S.T.L.A., which preferred not to take the workers, or even its own organizers into its confidence but acted behind closed doors." Reflecting the premium DeLeon was now putting on political dependability, Bloor, when relating her impressions of the truculent DeLeonite William Brower, who headed the STLA, mentioned that "DeLeon supported . . . [Brower's] retention in office, although admitting he 'wasn't fit to run a dog house' " (Bloor, *We Are Many*, p. 57).

47. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 14; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 41-42. DeLeon's discounting of numbers is understandable, since after the Party split in 1899, the STLA shrank virtually to the boundaries of his own District Alliance 49, the remnants of his old K. of L. bailiwick (Gitelman, "Attempts," p. 508).

48. DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, pp. 43-44.

49. *Founding Convention, IWW: Proceedings*, p. 8; Daniel DeLeon, "The Chicago Convention," *Daily People*, June 27, 1905, in DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 63.

## 8. Industrialism

1. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 92; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 21-22; DeLeon, *Two Pages*, p. 70, emphasis added.

2. The most able account of the rise of Western working-class radicalism is Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), pp. 5-87.

3. By 1905, the American Labor Union could claim to represent nearly seventeen thousand workers and its close ally, the Western Federation of Miners, another twenty-seven thousand (*Founding Convention, IWW: Proceedings*, p. 8).

4. The influence of the ALU as an example pointing the way to a plausible alternative more palatable than that of settling with the Socialist Party is confirmed by DeLeon's quotation in two separate places of a passage from an article in the May 26, 1904, issue of the *American Labor Union Journal*, which attacked the SP for its friendliness toward the AFL. One reference was in the form of a footnote added to DeLeon's April 1904 address *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism* when it was issued as a pamphlet (see pp. 40-41 of the above-cited printing); appropriately, the speech unveiled for the first time, as mentioned above, the concept of an activist revolutionary union with an exclusive mission that was deemed beyond the powers of the socialist political party. The quotation also occurs, significantly, in the same volume with DeLeon's discourse on the uneven socioeconomic development of the American polity and his chiding of the International for its passage of a unity resolution; see DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 167-168. See also, on p. 168 of the latter, a second citation of a piece in the ALU organ that carried on in the same vein as the first.

5. Daniel DeLeon, "A Mission of the Trades Union," *Daily People*, March

4, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 18-19. DeLeon made these comments in the context of regretting that the ALU had wedded itself politically to the SP. No doubt encouraged by the evidence (mentioned in the preceding note) indicating that the ALU was becoming more discriminating, he expressed confidence (p. 20) "that this blunder will soon be rectified." By the eve of the IWW's first convention, he was satisfied enough with its progress to list it, with the STLA, as a progenitor of the class-conscious unionism that was expected to animate the new body (Daniel DeLeon, "The Chicago Convention," *Daily People*, June 27, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 63).

6. Daniel DeLeon, "The 'Intellectual,'" *Daily People*, March 19, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 25; DeLeon, "Chicago Convention," p. 63.

7. DeLeon to Henry Kuhn, July 9, 1905, published in Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel DeLeon," in Socialist Labor Party, *DeLeon Symposium*, I, 52.

8. The assemblage was a microcosm of the American left in the period, in all its diversity. Besides the DeLeonites, there were anarchists like Haymarket martyr widow Lucy Parsons, syndicalists like William Trautmann of the Brewery Workers, politically radical industrial unionists such as William D. Haywood and the ALU delegation, Socialist Party men such as Debs and Algie Simons, and individual rebels of ill-defined and fuliginous political sympathies, of whom the indomitable Mother Jones was perhaps the best example. All, of course, demanded a preamble that they could embrace unhesitatingly.

9. The most prominent instance is in McKee, "Reappraisal," 274-277.

10. *Founding Convention, IWW: Proceedings*, pp. 5-6; Daniel DeLeon, "Two Flies with One Clap," *Daily People*, January 25, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 13-14; DeLeon, "Chicago Convention," p. 64; DeLeon, "The 'Intellectual,'" p. 24; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 45, 50, 39. Already by 1904, DeLeon had accepted that the ballot, per se, could not be "a creative power," but he was not yet prepared to attribute that power to the "physical force" wielded by the union either (DeLeon, *Flashlights*, p. 94).

11. DeLeon, *Unity*, p. 21; Daniel DeLeon, "Apropos of 'Direct Action,'" *Daily People*, April 2, 1913, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 67; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 42.

12. Daniel DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism," *Daily People*, August 10, 1909, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 50; Daniel DeLeon, "Industrialism," *Daily People*, March 23, 1910, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 53; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 117.

13. DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, p. 13; DeLeon, "Industrialism," p. 53; Daniel DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," *Daily People*, April 13, 1913, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 75; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 26, 55-56.

14. DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 14; DeLeon, "Chicago Convention," p. 64; DeLeon, "Industrialism," p. 58; DeLeon, *Unity*, p. 21.

15. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 7-8; DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* pp. 22-24; DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 18-19; DeLeon,

*Burning Question*, p. 25. Even as early as 1890, DeLeon, when speaking to a mass meeting of strikers, noted that the workers faced not one employer, but a united employing class, against which only the SLP vote could avail (*Workmen's Advocate*, October 18, 1890).

16. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 55-56, 41; DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism," p. 50.

17. The clearest instance is again in McKee, "Reappraisal," 278-279. A *mea culpa* is in order for the present author as well, who incorporated McKee's misconception into an earlier study (Seretan, "Personal Style," 173-174).

18. DeLeon, "Chicago Convention," p. 64; Daniel DeLeon, "Industrialism," *Daily People*, January 23, 1906, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 35-36; also see DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 40.

19. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 50; DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism," p. 51; "Daniel DeLeon Lectures," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, March 9, 1907; Daniel DeLeon, "The 'General Strike,'" *Daily People*, May 29, 1909; Daniel DeLeon, "Still in Forming," *Daily People*, July 26, 1906, in Daniel DeLeon, *Russia in Revolution: Selected Editorials* (New York: N.Y. Labor News Co., 1927), p. 38; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 116, 102-103.

20. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 47; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 29, 34, 26.

21. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 45, 49, 46-47, 55; Daniel DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism," *Daily People*, January 20, 1913, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 65.

22. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 52; Daniel DeLeon, "Danger Ahead for Russia," *Daily People*, October 28, 1905, in DeLeon, *Russia in Revolution*, pp. 25-26. In declining to endorse the general strike, and in seeing it as but a larger manifestation of the ordinary strike, DeLeon's post-1905 stand was consistent with his earlier pronouncements on the subject (see DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 96-97). McKee ("Reappraisal," 283-284) was incorrect in claiming otherwise, as was Seretan ("Personal Style," 174) when citing McKee on the point.

23. "November 11. New York Socialists Honoring the Chicago Martyrs," *Workmen's Advocate*, November 15, 1890; DeLeon, *Flashlights*, pp. 94-97. See, for example, DeLeon's *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 56; *As to Politics*, pp. 18, 52, 61, 90-91; "Haywoodism and Industrialism," p. 76.

24. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 60-61, 74-77, 86-87. The likely cause for this was the Haywood-Pettibone-Moyer case, which stirred class resentments in the labor movement to a fever pitch. William D. Haywood and Charles Moyer were Western Federation of Miners officials and George A. Pettibone, a former union member friendly with WFM leaders. The three were arrested in Colorado in 1906 and illegally removed to Idaho to stand trial on trumped-up charges of murdering former Idaho governor Frank Steunenberg. The men were eventually exonerated, but not before their case had become a cause célèbre and underscored the unscrupulousness of labor's foe. For details of the case, see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, pp. 96-105.

25. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 86, 61.

26. "November 11. New York Socialists Honoring the Chicago Martyrs"; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 54; DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 15; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 76.

27. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 115-116. DeLeon was referring only to the American context here. He elsewhere allowed that the military option was a plausible one in a country like France, "where as yet there is no large capitalism to rank the proletariat into the battalions of an industrial insurrectionary organization, and thereby to furnish the Revolution, as an equivalent for a military force, with a mighty non-military engine of physical force, but where, on the other hand, compulsory military service has amply prepared the soil for militarily organized insurrection, and in which, moreover, national traditions lightly turn the thought to just such methods" (Daniel DeLeon, "'Syndicalism,'" *Daily People*, August 3, 1909, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 45-46).

28. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 117; Daniel DeLeon, "With Marx for Text," *Daily People*, June 29, 1907, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, p. 39.

29. DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism (1913)," pp. 65, 64; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, pp. 34, 30; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 44-45, 47. For further specifics on how the shape of the new order would differ from that of the old, see DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," pp. 75-76.

30. DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, p. 41; DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," p. 72; Daniel DeLeon, "Stale, Yet Valuable," *Daily People*, February 10, 1905; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 46, 39; Petersen, *Bourgeois Socialism*, p. 202.

31. DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism (1913)," p. 64. Obviously looking ahead to the day when the IWW would be the government, DeLeon advocated at the movement's first convention that it establish a "central directing authority" instead of a looser administrative structure (William E. Trautmann, "The History of the Industrial Union Manifesto," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, August 22, 1908).

32. DeLeon, *Ballot and Class Struggle*, pp. 40, 42; DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," p. 73; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 101; DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 14.

33. Again, particularly McKee ("Reappraisal," 289-291) and, relying on McKee's erroneous claim, Seretan ("Personal Style," 174).

34. The probable influence of *Looking Backward* on DeLeon's Industrial Union government has also been noted by earlier writers; see John Chamberlain, *Farewell to Reform: The Rise, Life and Decay of the Progressive Mind in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1965), p. 85; and White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 182. The impact of Bellamy is further suggested by the striking parallel between his elaborately articulated, tightly integrated Industrial Army and what DeLeon referred to at one point as the "Industrialist Army," whose quasi-military morphology closely resembled that of Bellamy's creation (DeLeon, "Industrialism [1910]," p. 54).

35. Laurence Gronlund, *The Cooperative Commonwealth*, ed. Stow Persons (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,

1965); Lazarus, "Origins of DeLeonist Thought," 16-17. The term "cooperative commonwealth," a standard one among radicals of the day connoting the economically organized polity of the future pictured by Gronlund and Bellamy, was employed frequently in this sense by DeLeon, a firm believer in precise terminology, both before and after the emergence of the IWW, indicating that the cooperative commonwealth and Industrial government were, in his mind, the same thing. For post-1904 instances, see: DeLeon, *Fifteen Questions*, p. 14; DeLeon quotation from 1906 IWW convention proceedings in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, II, 33. See also Daniel DeLeon and William H. Berry, *Capitalism vs. Socialism* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1969), p. 50, and DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, p. 45, where "Cooperative Commonwealth" and "Industrial Republic" or "Industrial Government" are used interchangeably.

36. B., "Anarchism at Nationalist Club No. 3," *Workmen's Advocate*, October 18, 1890. As mentioned in Chapter 5, DeLeon paid Lassalle the tribute of translating and having published in English his drama *Franz von Sickingen*. Lassalle, remarked DeLeon, was "a thinker of deep penetration" (DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 27).

37. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, 1967). According to the account of at least one contemporary, DeLeon had been so impressed with Morgan's work that he credited it with having confirmed his conversion to socialism. (Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 94.) Certainly encomiums to Morgan abound in DeLeon's speeches and writings, the anthropologist's name often being coupled, especially after 1904, with Marx's in a manner indicating that *Ancient Society* inspired the theory of Industrialism as much as the Marxian classics did (DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, pp. 4-8; Daniel DeLeon, "Morgan and the 'Federalist,'" *Daily People*, September 6, 1905, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 30-33; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 102; DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, p. 19; DeLeon and Berry, *Capitalism vs. Socialism*, p. 18; DeLeon quotation in Petersen, *Supreme Court*, p. 61).

38. Anderson, *Legend*, p. 234. Given the pervasiveness in socialist writing of the notion that future society would govern itself on industrial rather than territorial lines, it is likely that most of DeLeon's contemporaries on the left shared it, that it was in fact typical of socialist thinking about the shape of tomorrow. Supporting this assumption is the fact that SLP sections, in state convention resolutions and other statements of policy, revealed such expectations about the character of the coming order years before DeLeon formally enunciated them as part of Industrial Unionism (White, "Socialist Labor Party," p. 182).

39. "Labor Lyceum," *Workmen's Advocate*, August 3, 1889; "May Day in New York. Under the Banner of Socialism," *Workmen's Advocate*, May 10, 1890; DeLeon, "Prof. DeLeon Replies."

40. DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 20-21. The cooperative com-



monwealth idea persisted as an ultimate goal for DeLeon, as evidenced in a speech he delivered at the December 1895 meeting that launched the STLA. He then said, in a proposed resolution of endorsement of the Alliance, that "the issue between the capitalist class and the laboring class is essentially a political issue involving such modifications of our institutions as may be required for the abolition of all classes by transferring to the whole people as a corporate body the land and machinery of production" (quoted in Quint, *Forging*, p. 162).

41. DeLeon, *Reform or Revolution*, p. 7. DeLeon reiterated his summary of Morgan's analysis in much the same language in *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, pp. 18-19, concluding with the observation that the "productive system of today . . . is [like] a large orchestra . . . In order to conduct this productive orchestra there must be a central directing authority."

42. James Creelman, "Five Million Socialists Here, Says DeLeon; What They Stand For," *New York World*, November 9, 1902.

43. DeLeon, *Report to Stuttgart International, 1907*, pp. 13-14; DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, pp. 44-45.

44. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 52; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 60; DeLeon, *Burning Question*, p. 34. See also DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 61.

45. William E. Trautmann, "The History of the Industrial Union Manifesto," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, August 8, 1908, August 22, 1908. As it developed, Debs stayed away from the 1906 convention and soon after allowed his membership to lapse, while DeLeon, as noted above, found himself arrayed against Sherman and on the side of the antipolitical faction on the more fundamental issue of keeping the IWW on its class-conscious course.

46. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 18-19, 26-27, 62-63, 75.

47. *Founding Convention, IWW: Proceedings*, p. 247; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 42; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 41, 73-74. One brief remark uttered by DeLeon years before the formation of the IWW lends credence to the supposition that he may have been groping all along for a mechanism that would effect just this kind of organic connection between the political movement and the proletarian rank and file. Speaking in 1901, DeLeon declared that the party of socialism attempts to convey to workers that "it must . . . be something, not outside, not separate and apart from you; it must be flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone; it must have men at its back" (DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 21). The statement tends to support the view that a political reflex for the industrial union organization was to be the institutional fulfillment of this sensed need, a device for thorough immersion in the proletariat. The relationship suggested goes well beyond the mere "affiliation" with a political party that the preamble prohibited and which DeLeon was happy to forgo in favor of the political reflex he believed the preamble tacitly authorized.

48. DeLeon, "With Marx for Text," p. 38. DeLeon was referring here to the Socialist Party's policy of "neutrality" toward trade unions, which, he alleged, was the unacknowledged reflex of the AFL's dictum of "no politics in the union."

49. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 109. DeLeon (p. 19) envisioned that the SLP's adherence to this IWW party would be that of "a body merging into its own ideal."

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

51. *Founding Convention, IWW: Proceedings*, pp. 226-227. See also DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 50.

52. DeLeon, "Mission of the Trades Union," p. 19; DeLeon, "The 'Intellectual,'" pp. 23-24; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 49, 50-52.

53. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 50. In this respect, the party served in the same capacity vis-a-vis the union as it had in DeLeon's New Trade Unionist doctrine.

54. DeLeon, "Demands 'Immediate' and 'Constant,'" p. 29. The "economic laws" alluded to here were apparently those dictating the inevitable decline of wages under capitalism.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 44-45, 39-40, 46-47; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 57.

57. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 53; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 16-17. By suggesting political agitation to be a "constructive" force, DeLeon was retrieving a pre-IWW stand he had taken on the question (see his *Flashlights*, p. 96) and apparently contradicting the one he had outlined in the immediate aftermath of the IWW's founding, that is, that the political movement was "purely destructive"—all of which illustrates his ambivalence about politics during his tenure in the IWW.

58. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 18. The idea that losing an election was more than compensated for by the excellent propaganda forum such provided was also the renewal of an old theme for DeLeon. As noted in Chapter 3, he had made the same case as a Nationalist; see H. G., "Nationalist Club No. 3. Closing Lecture of the Season—Are We Ready for Nationalism?" *Workmen's Advocate*, May 31, 1890.

59. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 104, 26. DeLeon's choice of example betrayed how deeply ingrained the method of politics was in his personality.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 58, 62. This question DeLeon kept thrusting at his opponents throughout the "As to Politics" debate, and they were unable to reply to his satisfaction.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 72. DeLeon further pointed out (p. 109), as already mentioned in Chapter 4, that the political movement also made possible the enlistment of the efforts of nonproletarians whose occupations prevented their membership in bona fide industrial unions and who would otherwise have been unduly excluded from the revolutionary movement.

62. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, pp. 40, 49; DeLeon, "Haywoodism and Industrialism," p. 74; DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, p. 45. For further mention of the amendment clause in this context, see: "John Swinton. Greeted by Three Thousand Toilers," *Workmen's Advocate*, October 18, 1890; Daniel DeLeon, "A Lesson in Constitutional Law," *Daily People*, October 7, 1901, in Petersen, *Supreme Court*, pp. 102-103; DeLeon, "Industrialism (1910)," p. 65;

Daniel DeLeon, "Elihu Root's Correct Instinct," *Daily People*, March 10, 1911, in Petersen, *Supreme Court*, p. 100; DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*, p. 45; DeLeon, "1912 Platform," p. 15.

63. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 48; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 18; DeLeon, "1912 Platform," pp. 13-14. DeLeon associated conspiratorial methods with the individualist mentality of anarchism, which, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, he likewise saw as offal left behind by the onward march of history. Well before the IWW, he had been asserting that "you must educate the masses first. You can not move faster than the masses move with you in this Twentieth Century" (DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 16).

64. DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 91. The reference here to "McParland" is to James McParland, a notorious undercover agent of the period, who was responsible for breaking up the "Molly Maguires" and for the plot to frame Haywood, Pettibone, and Moyer in the Steunenberg murder case.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 86, 81, 74 (see also p. 39); Daniel DeLeon, "Del. DeLeon on the Preamble," in "Brief Extracts from Speeches on Variety of Convention Topics," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, October 5, 1907; DeLeon, "With Marx for Text," p. 38. The idea of the party as a protective body for the union was not novel, having been a part of the New Trade Unionism; see DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* p. 29, and DeLeon and Harriman, *Debate*, p. 7. DeLeon's warnings on this score proved prophetic in the years following his departure from the IWW. The strikes the Wobblies led were often defeated by the massive infusion of state power on the side of the employers—state power that a political reflex might have neutralized or at least challenged and moderated. This pattern culminated in 1917 when a nation-wide crackdown was instituted against the IWW, with scores of its leaders being haled into state and federal courts on a myriad of subversion charges and subsequently imprisoned. The result was the virtual destruction of the organization as a labor body, work made infinitely easier for the authorities by the IWW's self-designation as a movement that rejected political action in favor of "direct action"—a term that the union's enemies readily and falsely interpreted for public consumption to mean outlawry and violence (Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, pp. 173-468). Though DeLeon did not live to see the ultimate realization of his prophecy, he did relish the occasional incident that confirmed his assessment of the need for a political shield, such as when IWW organizer Joe Ettor was brought to trial in 1913 and his attorney submitted as evidence of his client's peaceful and lawful intent a clause from the original Industrial Union Manifesto implying the necessity of political action (DeLeon, "Apropos of 'Direct Action,'" p. 68).

66. Seretan, "Personal Style," 190-201. Even as the controversy surrounding the political clause in the preamble intensified, the remarks DeLeon directed toward his opponents in the debate were temperate, judicious, and generous; see DeLeon, *As to Politics*, pp. 13, 19, 25, 38, 40-41, 71, 74, 76-77, 80-83, 89, 112. He could still, in mid-1907, recommend to British SLP comrades who desired a visit and speaking engagements that, due to his own inability to satisfy their request, they seek out Vincent St. John or Fred Heslewood, two

men who inclined toward the antipolitical wing of the IWW and who would oppose his being seated as a delegate at the union's convention the following year (DeLeon to Neil Maclean, June 27, 1907, facsimile reproduction in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 39).

67. Warren R. Van Tine, "Ben H. Williams, Wobbly Editor" (M.A. thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1967), pp. 25, 27; "Let Us Make Straight the Way!" *Industrial Union Bulletin*, May 2, 1908; "General Executive Board Matters," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, May 23, 1908; "Is It to Be a Repetition of Montjuich?" *Industrial Union Bulletin*, September 19, 1908.

68. Daniel DeLeon, "The Intellectual against the Worker. Extracts from Arguments Made by Daniel DeLeon of New York City," *Industrial Union Bulletin*, October 10, 1908. This tendentious title was obviously provided afterward by the *Bulletin's* hostile staff. A measure of the extent to which DeLeon had, in the years since 1905, transferred his notion of the class-conscious proletarian community from the Party to the IWW was his use here of the same nautical metaphor for the union that, as noted in Chapter 5, he had employed to convey his sense of the ideal party.

69. Quite logically, the convention proceeded to delete the political clause from the preamble. For a full account of DeLeon's tenure in the IWW, see Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, pp. 91-170.

70. From the first, DeLeon declined nomination for union office. (*Founding Convention*, IWW: *Proceedings*, p. 535.)

71. DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, p. 7; DeLeon, "Danger Ahead for Russia," p. 26; DeLeon, "Industrial Unionism (1909)," p. 51; DeLeon, "Chicago Convention," pp. 62-64; DeLeon, *As to Politics*, p. 84.

## 9. The Life and Legacy of DeLeon

1. DeLeon, "Should Jews Celebrate Christmas?"; DeLeon and Carmody, *Debate*; DeLeon and Berry, *Capitalism vs. Socialism*.

2. See, for example, Daniel DeLeon, "Industrialism," *Daily People*, March 23, 1910, in DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism*, pp. 52-61. In this comparatively long piece, DeLeon elaborately outlines and explains the structural plan of a phantasmic Industrial Union body.

3. Kuhn and Johnson, *Four Decades*, pp. 86, 89; DeLeon, *Address*, p. 8. These comments indicate the beating of yet another retreat to the diminishing sanctuary of the party community, a retracing of the steps taken when the STLA experiment started to produce misgivings in 1898—with the exception that now the sham of a Party-manipulated economic puppet was fully recognized as such.

4. Rudolph Katz, "With DeLeon since '89," in Socialist Labor Party, *DeLeon Symposium*, II, 159-163.

5. *Founding Convention*, IWW: *Proceedings*, p. 147.

6. Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 281.

7. A hint of DeLeon's subliminal correlation of the community of Judaism to Morgan's evocation of primitive communism can be found in a discussion

of the material basis of religion in one of his lectures. There, one of his key illustrations draws upon the egalitarian system of property redistribution that prevailed among the Jews under Mosaic law, prior to their subjection by the Roman Legions. But with the irruption of the more advanced civilization of Rome, DeLeon recounted, came a new social order and a permanent inequality of wealth (DeLeon, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*, p. 27).

8. See the section headed "Canons of the Proletarian Revolution" in DeLeon, *Two Pages*, pp. 69-87.

9. Rischin, *Promised City*, pp. 225-226. Evidence that Jewish workingmen were in fact wont to look upon DeLeon as a Mosaic reincarnation can be noted in a reverent appreciation appearing shortly after his death in the Yiddish-language socialist publication *Die Zukunft*. The writer, A. Liessin, remarked that: "DeLeon came down to the American trade unions with Socialism just as Moses came down to the Jews with the Torah. Moses inclined Mount Sinai upon the Jews and said: If you accept the Torah, all will be well; otherwise, here will I make your graves. In the similar vein, DeLeon wished to thrust Socialism upon the Americans" (A. Liessin, "Daniel DeLeon," from *Die Zukunft*, June 1914, trans. from the Yiddish by Louis Lazarus, New York, 1960, pp. 3-4, MSS in Tamiment Collection, Bobst Library, New York University).

10. "When Thousands Gather," *Newark Evening News*, May 21, 1914, quoted in Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon*, I, 288-289. See also pp. 36-37, 287.

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## Note on Sources

This study has relied principally on Daniel DeLeon's voluminous published works, which, in the absence of collected personal papers, constitute the best available source for an understanding of the man. Of the existing manuscript material, the most useful is that housed in Columbia University's Columbiana Collection, offering as it does a glimpse into DeLeon's academic career and his first steps in the direction of radical politics. The author's large personal correspondence with surviving contemporaries, other scholars, archival institutions, and depositories of public and community records, while too extensive for detailed enumeration here, was nevertheless quite helpful in establishing basic facts about DeLeon's life, particularly his early years, and in setting sensible research boundaries for the study. Among the newspapers and periodicals surveyed, the *Nationalist* is essential for an appreciation of DeLeon's phase as a polite reformer-cum-revolutionary, as is the *Workmen's Advocate*, which is indispensable as well for pinpointing the origins of several of the important themes in his later thought. The most worthwhile of the other contemporary sources are the published recollections of DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party comrades. These must be used with caution, inasmuch as they tend to be blindly idolatrous and politically self-serving; yet, as the reminiscences of the people who worked most closely with DeLeon, they cannot be ignored.

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